Conservative Wisdom & Modern Culture

Chronicles of Culture

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 7 JULY 1983 $1.50

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Contents

4 Comment — Leopold Tyrmand

Opinions & Views

6 Building with Broken Tools — William R. Hawkins
—Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison: *The Deindustrialization of America*
—Stephen Hilgartner, Richard Bell, and Rory O'Connor: *Nukespeak*
—Walter E. Williams: *The State Against Blacks*

9 The Chameleon Papers — Ronald Berman
—*Letters of Archibald MacLeish*; Edited by R. H. Winnick

11 Benign Neglect — Joseph Schwartz
—Don DeLillo: *The Names*

13 Art Is Elitist & Other Impolite Observations — Gary S. Vasilash
—Peter Uwe Hohendahl: *The Institution of Criticism*

17 Traveling By Stationary Bicycle — John C. Caiazza
—Charles Hatch Stoddard: *Looking Forward*
—Louis Galambos: *America at Middle Age*

20 Stardust Memories — Stephen J. Sniegoski
—Hamilton Jordan: *Crisis*

21 Uncritical Caresses — Linda Thorne
—Joan Givner: *Katherine Anne Porter*
—Paul Mariani: *William Carlos Williams*

24 Spare Change — Betsy Clarke
—Gail Albert: *Matters of Chance*
—Marguerite Yourcenar: *A Coin in Nine Hands*
—Lina Wertmüller: *The Head of Alvise*
—*Extended Outlooks*; Edited by Jane Cooper et al.

26 Mismanaging War & Morals — Thomas Fleming
—William H. McNeill: *The Pursuit of Power*
—James F. Childress: *Moral Responsibility in Conflicts*

28 Watching the Pillars Crumble — Dennis Q. McInerny
—Susan Cheever: *The Cage*
—Anne Rice: *Cry to Heaven*

30 The Prognosticator's Shuffle — Herbert I. London
—John Naisbitt: *Megatrends*

Commendables

32 Against a Child's Garden Perverse — Carlisle Packard
—Rita Kramer: *In Defense of the Family*

Of Raphael and Relativity: *Angels, Apes, and Men*

In Focus

33 Footnoting Falwell: *American Evangelicalism*
Aged Wine and Rebottled Ripple: *The Otis Ferguson Reader, Before My Eyes*

34 Snapshots from the Seashore: *The Complete Poems 1927-1979*
High-Tech Conservatism: *The Reagans*

Waste of Money

35 A Video Arcadia — T. Mark Kulish
—Donna Woolfolk Cross: *Mediaspeak*

No-Nukes Neurosis: *The Cult of the Atom*

36 Murdering a Theory: *Washed in the Blood*
Postmodern Schlock: *Ancient Evenings*

Screen

38 Counterfeiting Screen Gems: *Mabel, Rita Hayworth*

Please Pass the Pepto: *Eating Raoul*

Music

39 A Crock of Rock — Stephen Macaulay
—Guy Peellaert and Nik Cohn: *Rock Dreams*

Correspondence

42 Letter from Europe: Blending Mayonnaise While Europe Crumbles — Allan C. Carlson

Polemics & Exchanges

44 On Freud
. . . from New York — John Clifton
. . . from California — Frank Goble
. . . from New York — Bertram Lippman

Dr. Peters Replies

Journalism

49 Acknowledgments
The Organ of Taste
But My Mommy Said . . .
Inspiring Boundless Confidence

The American Proscenium

50 The Ingersoll Prizes

51 Inquiry and Assessment in Chicago—Truth & Fact

Liberal Culture/8, 16

The Past Today Vol. 7, No. 6 June 1983

Comment: Fleming; Tanner on Beattie and Oates *(The Burning House, A Bloodsmoor Romance)*; Moser on Semprun and Simis *(What a Beautiful Sunday!, USSR: The Corrupt Society)*; Hawkins on Hammond and Ellison *(Witnesses to the Origins of the Cold War, The Sino-Soviet Conflict)*; Christensen on Kolakowski and Wilber *(Religion, A Sociable God)*; Vasilash on Hernadi, Bruns, and Scholes *(The Horizon of Literature, Inventions, Semiotics and Interpretation)*; Hallman on McMurtry, Settle, Walker, and Segura *(Cadillac Jack, The Killing Ground, The Color Purple, Marshland Brace)*; Dickinson on Hildesheimer *(Mozart)*; Wolfe on White, Updike, and Elkin *(A Boy's Own Story, Bech is Back, George Mills)*; Lynch on Phelan, Zion, Rosenberg, and Westin *(Scandals, Scamps, and Scoundrels, Read All About It!, Inside The Wall Street Journal, Newswatch)*; Scott on Lomask and Long *(Aaron Burr, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant)*; Kopff on Golding and Sillitoe *(A Moving Target, Her Victory)*; Bower on Wilkins and Wilkins *(Standing Fast, A Man's Life)*; Levine on Miller and Kutler *("Benevolent Assimilation," The American Inquisition)*; Commendables; In Focus; Waste of Money; Screen; Polemics & Exchanges; The American Proscenium; Journalism; Liberal Culture.

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Chronicles of Culture
Vol. 7, No. 7 July 1983

Conservative Wisdom & Modern Culture

Chronicles of Culture (ISSN 0163-1187) is published monthly by The Rockford Institute; President: John Howard. Editorial and business offices: 934 North Main Street, Rockford, Illinois 61103. Phone: (815) 964-5054. Editor: Leopold Tyrmand; Associate Editor: Gary S. Vasilash; Managing Editor: Rebecca Woosley; Editorial Intern: Bryce Christensen; Editorial Secretary: Julie Maloyan; Publisher: Richard Vaughan; Production Coordinator: Lindy Ellingwood; Subscription Manager: Anita Fedora. Circulation phone: (815) 964-5811. Printed by Wilson-Hall Co. Technical Services: Marge Wollschlager Composition. Subscriptions: $18.00 one year.

Cover and graphic materials within the text from *Decorative Silhouettes of the Twenties* selected and introduced by Jo Anne C. Day (New York: Dover Publications, 1975). Original vignette by Warren Chappell. Copyright © 1983 by The Rockford Institute. All rights reserved.

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EDITOR'S COMMENT

Let us be frank—those evocative adjectives *liberal* and *conservative* have become semantic crutches. They no longer denote judgment, principle, and discernment, but rather preference, mood, penchant, sudden sympathy, immature choice, prefabricated emotion, political directive, econometric estimate. They meant something different at the outset of this century, as well as in the 1870's. Henrik Ibsen wrote: "He has the luck to be unhampered by either character, or conviction, or social position; so that Liberalism is the easiest thing in the world for him." It's unlikely that that old muttonchopped feminist would ever have made it from Greenwich Village to Congress with such a campaign slogan. And he was off mark to boot: today's liberal *is* a mammoth pile of convictions, and social position is the source of his power. But the *ease* of being liberal is now as obvious as it was in Ibsen's time.

Oh, how easy, how cozy and beautiful it is to be liberal! How inebriating to find the proper faith at the bottom of one's heart! How lavish are the comforts of rectitude! How precious it is to feel always enlightened and decent! How safe it is never to leave the side of peace and equality! How rewarding—in every respect—it is to hate exploitation and prejudice! How gratifying it is to luxuriate nonstop in compassion! How reassuring it is to be perennially armed with a correct conscience, superior knowledge, an infallible sense of justice! How soft and snug to be constantly well informed about what's best for society, man, woman, child, animal, and plant! How secure it is to be responsible always to motivation and never to reality, to defend instinct against reflection, and never to peek under the warm blanket of liberal self-adulation!

This perfunctory outburst should not be interpreted as a verdict on facility. There's a kind of sturdiness in the liberal post-Panglossian fervor, and there's mental gumption in the pursuit of ready-to-wear righteousness. The nobleness of causes that are loved at first sight is actually as honorable as any. There's a sort of wisdom in synthesizing idealism and optimism into a heady certitude, and in distilling fiery commitment from such sour mash. All progressives, from Rousseau to Marx to the Institute for Policy Studies have claimed that heaven on earth *is* possible, and they have all promised to do something about it. After two centuries, the consequences of their ideas have produced, for countless societies, hell on earth. Somehow, this has never affected the marketability and demand for those messages—which proves either generic human dim-wittedness or some actual acumen of those ideas which can't be slighted. My own deep contempt for them notwithstanding, I must admit that their circulation over the last two centuries has improved many social practicalities, and that their influence is verifiable and measurable

and must not be simply demeaned. What's unacceptable, even repulsive, is their latent absolutism, which turns their defenders into rabid persecutors of anyone's attempt to honestly evaluate those ideas. What the liberal peremptorily rejects is any objective inquiry into the misery, oppression, injustice, tyranny, madness, violence, and crippling misfortunes of the human masses victimized by the implementation of progressive orthodoxies. These precepts should be judged on the merit of conceptual purity, the liberal intones; his adversaries' unforgivable sin is that they promise very little in terms of terrestrial remuneration, offering instead only a problematic recompense in heaven. In other words, the liberal sees antiliberalism as a sort of apocalyptic dullness. He refuses to admit that an aversion to selling a dishonest, snake-oil pledge of happiness for everybody is not conservative boredom but sterling decency. He thus divests himself of his chief argument—that he is a decent guy—and becomes the crooked caterer of fake ideological fun.

So, where is *our* wisdom?

It's mainly in our harrowing feeling that the world is crumbling around us and that most liberal raptures have resulted in a rotting civilization, a debased culture, a fragmented man, and a nihilistic social ethos. We know *why* the promised garden of liberal superhumanity transmogrified into the liberal jungle where psychologically excused wickedness roams free. Ours is the wisdom of torment; as such, it can be a bold, valid challenge to the vile illusoriness of social paradises and existential entitlements. Our wisdom tells us, tactfully, that if everything in sight is decomposing, it is not because of *our* narrow-mindedness, greed, hypocrisy, prudishness, and mediocrity, but precisely because of *their* goodness, justness,

The Editor's Comment is an enlarged version of a speech presented at the national meeting of The Philadelphia Society on April 16, 1983.

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and magnanimously open minds, all so celebrated in the now-monopolized cultural communications networks. We stand accused of wishing to suppress the humanitarian impulse in man, but no one mentions the defaced humanitarianism of the cultures in which homo has been replaced by ego, where the wealth of humanness that took millennia to accumulate has been pulverized into cheap solipsism. Since social perfectionism has ended in gulags, all those who hate the bourgeois civilization now have a more condemnable enemy than laissez-faire capitalism—namely the normative systems of values which we have inherited from Judeo-Christian and Hellenic wisdom. In our time, the "progressive" theorists no longer insist on head-to-head struggles with mechanisms of production or political structures. They pervert them. They have learned that they cannot defeat the human need for religion and tradition—so they declare them archfoes of some fictitious modernity and innocence. Being unable to redefine goodness according to their vacuous gospel, any grand, comprehensive design for civilization eludes them. Thus they are forced to draw constantly from *our* inheritance—and they venomously corrupt and disfigure it in the process of borrowing. Whereas our wisdom tells us simply that the supreme assets of civilizations are not social blueprints but *people:* if people are good and live wisely, civilizations thrive.

So what are we fighting for? I would propose that we battle for the human mind or—as *they* put it—consciousness. *We* fight for the soul; *they* fight for a society which they trust will determine the soul. The mere fact that they still believe in such a triviality in spite of five millennia of experience to the contrary, is consoling. All philosophies promise to improve either man or his fate or both. Liberals claim that by bettering his material condition, they'll make man (soul included) better, and his destiny controlled. We cling to the idea that by asking man to be better, we may—possibly—ameliorate society, and thus, perhaps, man's destiny. In the vocable "perhaps" is the crux of our conflict with the liberals. This is why they hate us and deny us the right to talk about man, his fate, his soul. They cannot pardon incertitude: *they* know no hesitation about *their* precepts, which are nonnegotiable, as is the liberals' demand to do with and to man only what *they* deem proper and just. Our wisdom, therefore, makes us suspect that they are ordinary totalitarians and should be dealt with as such.

But does our reliance on the conditional drown us in the swamp of relativism? Not quite. The conservative wisdom asks us not to budge on three issues. I happen to think that *our* civilization could not survive if it were robbed of these fundamental notions: repentance, normalcy, and skepticism. Yet at this juncture of history, the robbery is going on full speed. Atonement is derided as superstition: politicians and writers who are implicated in murders are hailed as more humane if they *do not* redeem their sins. Normalcy is ridiculed as a psychological fossil, or as abuse through statistics, while doubt about the liberal vision is forcibly banned from the national culture. But conservative wisdom informs us that an organized *and* free society is doomed without the consequence of clear thinking—man's best protection from nature, fate, and himself. Such clarity, in turn, is impossible without penitence, the marrow of moral order, without norms, our existential guideline, without skepticism, our natural right to free inquiry.

Thus where do we stand, with all our sagacity, in the universe of modern culture? I would venture to say: nowhere. Whatever sublime virtue there is in our message, we have let ourselves be pushed out of the territory where wisdom turns into popular symbols and signals. We have proved to be thoroughly inept when it comes to locating and cultivating that delicate membrane which separates and yet connects culture and politics; it's in precisely this tissue that the philosophies of life germinate, where complex social conditioners form a civil person and his moral imperatives, where, actually, the future of repentance, normalcy, and free inquiry is decided. True, Dostoevski, Henry James, Conrad, Proust, Kafka, Eliot, Faulkner —the founding fathers of modern consciousness—were all bona fide conservatives. So were D. W. Griffith, John Ford, even Charlie Chaplin—that old fellow traveler—if his artistic sentiments are measured against those of current liberal criticism. If there are common denominators for these men's conservatism, they would be their postulate of explanation, their sense of logical norm, their hierarchy of values, all of which would make it rather unprofitable to turn *The Sound and the Fury* into a Broadway musical, or *Lord Jim* into a pornographic comic strip, as can be done with any Vidal or Vonnegut. Through those grandiose liberal achievements—feminism and the mechanization of sexuality (ludicrously called "a revolution")—a universe of feeling has been lost, and it now seems that both women and philanderers desperately wish to retrieve it. Life itself metes out punishments that conservative wisdom can rightly foretell as the consequences of false ideas. Yet we cannot creatively articulate an antidote. If ideology is a dirty word by which we all live, only the liberals know how to benefit from it: they keep issuing effective behavioral ukases which we try unsuccessfully to combat with tedious and trite sermons.

Philosophy without wisdom is like jazz without syncopation. This is why—rather than with scholastics and materialists —I'd have a dry martini or two with Socrates, Pascal, Dr. Johnson, and Voltaire. Yes, with Voltaire, the closet modern conservative who fought the despotism of privilege like we fight the despotism of perverted labels—which alone would have made him a contributor to the *Chronicles of Culture* if he lived today. So if, like Lenin, we ask: "What's to be done?" my answer would be: "First, refurbish our prescription for

continued on page 37

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Building with Broken Tools

Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison: *The Deindustrialization of America;* Basic Books; New York.

Stephen Hilgartner, Richard Bell, and Rory O'Connor: *Nukespeak;* Sierra Club Books; San Francisco.

Walter E. Williams: *The State Against Blacks;* McGraw-Hill; New York.

by William R. Hawkins

Production and distribution are two parts of economic theory. They also designate a line of division between the political right and left. The right has generally concentrated on production: business, technology, economic growth. The right's favored system of capitalism was the engine of the Industrial Revolution. Capitalism contains a distribution system, a production-based one. Those who produce receive a share in proportion to their contribution to the process. Since people contribute unequally, they receive unequally. And since entrepreneurial and managerial leadership is required to coordinate the division of labor, a hierarchy of authority develops in the economy as in other fields of human endeavor.

The left has, in contrast, been obsessed with distribution and redistribution. Marx took for granted the industrial system created by capitalism. The revolution would only equal out the distribution and level out the authority. This concept has run through all socialist and most liberal thinking since R. H. S. Crossman, a Labour Party leader, wrote in *The Future of Socialism* in 1950 that England had solved the production problem and only needed to worry about its proper distribution. Crossman lived another quarter century and watched his country lose the production race to its Asian and Continental rivals, so that its standard of living, regardless of how it was distributed, fell to become one of the lowest in Europe. Keynesians concentrated on distribution for consumption demand rather than investment for production. The 1960's saw the creation of an environmental movement, allied to the left, which explicitly rejected as evil both production and growth.

In the 1974, 1979, and 1981 recessions the U.S. was reminded of the benefits of zero growth: high unemployment and a lower standard of living for many others who were still working. Stagflation presented conservatives with an opportunity to gain public support since it was widely held that the nation's problems were production problems: inadequate investment, lagging productivity, inferior technology, and foreign competition. From this was born "supply-side economics," promising revitalization. Unfortunately, the slogan narrowed rather than broadened the issue as certain politicians equated the entire idea with the simple solution of personal tax cuts. Conservative leaders thus chose the policy variable most likely to raise the issue of distribution and give the left the chance to counterattack on the "fairness" issue. Not that taxes did not need to be cut. Taxes *were* too high. But the cuts were not presented in the proper context of a larger reindustrialization program, one that would have included targeted funds and tax benefits for industrial investment, research, and development; an educational shift toward vocational and scientific training; limited protection for key industries; and incentives for foreign investment in U.S. production. This would have required a role for government in redevelopment, a constructive role. Instead, tax cuts were oversold in isolation. What could have been an active program for a conservative economic and political revival became just another exercise in libertarian faith healing which quickly lost public confidence. The left is regrouping with reindustrialization programs of its own.

Unemployment is the most important social problem stemming from industrial decline. In human terms, it means not just lost income but the severance of the social bond forged in the work-place community and the loss of self-esteem. Those who are forced to live on charity suffer a loss of spirit which can breed an unhealthy bitterness toward the social order. A worker who loses his job through no direct fault of his own is fundamentally different from the congenital idler who is a permanent member of the welfare underclass. Unfortunately, conservatives sometimes do not comprehend this difference and adopt the same negative attitude toward both.

Billy Joel, in his best-selling record "Allentown," captures this mood of betrayal when he sings that though "our fathers fought the Second World War," they and their sons are now "standing in line, filling out forms" for welfare rather than working. The rewards they were promised "if they worked hard, if they behaved" are not forthcoming. The videotape produced for this song (often televised on cable networks) plays heavily on the connection between the military veteran and the worker.

Conservatives are concerned with the work ethic and social order. They

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must also be concerned with unemployment. If they are not, the right will suffer politically as the public turns to the left for "solutions." The economy will also suffer because leftist solutions do not work.

An example of the left's attempt to capture the reindustrialization issue is Bluestone and Harrison's *The Deindustrialization of America*. Both men are economics professors but with specialties in social welfare and urban policies rather than in areas concerned with problems of business and industry. Their basic theme is that America is declining because private corporations are reallocating capital investments away from traditional industrial communities in the U.S. They are concerned both with foreign investment and with shifts from "frost-belt" to "sun-belt" production. They are correct to worry about capital investment since it is the key to modern industry. However, they fail to understand it. Capital is a scarce resource as well as a vital one, and its owners naturally seek to invest it where it will earn the highest return. This promotes efficiency. The obvious implication is that if more investment is desired in a certain locale, the returns need to be more attractive there. If the U.S. is not as attractive as it used to be, as the authors concede, then reforms need to be instituted to restore that attractiveness. Bluestone and Harrison reject this because it is a capitalist concept and conflicts with their distributionist orientation.

After spending 230 pages blaming the plight of the unemployed and the problems of declining communities on greedy corporate planners, the authors present their plan for "reindustrialization with a human face." Their solution: "The first piece of business is to re-establish a public commitment to the maintenance (and indeed the *expansion*) of the social wage." In other words, they recommend the same Great Society approach that caused the mess in the first place. The elements of their plan include expanding welfare programs across the board, increasing the level and progressivity of the tax system, enacting legislation to prohibit capital mobility and, as seems mandatory for the left, cutting defense spending.

"This is an intensely irritating but important book . . . . I commend [Bluestone's and Harrison's] message to anyone interested in where America is and where it is going."
—**Alfred E. Kahn**
New York Times Book Review

"Bluestone and Harrison provide a convincing and graphic case."
—***The New Republic***

From authors who start out emphasizing the importance of capital investment, this conclusion is inexplicable. The welfare state has been fueled by deficits and high taxes. Deficits are a direct raid on the capital pool, converting savings into consumption rather than investment. The amount of privately held Federal debt rose from $222.8 billion in 1969 to $736.9 billion by mid-1982. This represents a diversion of $514.1 billion from private investment. And social programs have taken a disproportionate share of not only this but other public moneys as well.

The progressive income tax penalizes the very people who furnish the bulk of personal saving. This redistribution system again converts potential capital into spending. The U.S. continues to burden corporations more heavily than most other industrial nations with both a corporate-profits tax and a capital-gains tax. When Bluestone and Harrison call for heavier taxes they are talking ideology, not economics.

Bluestone and Harrison also reject the "corporatist" and "Japanese" approaches to reindustrialization. They cannot effectively dispute the economic gains of these plans which have attracted so many adherents. What they fear is that cooperation between labor, business, and government will be made for economic reasons, which means to them reasons associated with business. One result they fear is that high-technology, capital-intensive industries will benefit more than labor-intensive industries. This would be a necessary restructuring for the U.S. to become competitive in world markets. Evidently the authors feel workers will be better off in nonproductive rather than productive jobs. But labor-intensive jobs will not survive in the face of competition from Asian workers who are willing to labor at a fraction of U.S. wage scales. If workers are to maintain high wages in the U.S. they must learn to work "smarter" with more advanced tools. Productivity is essential both to jobs and wages, but Bluestone and Harrison act as if they have never heard of the term.

The authors are also afraid that cooperation between labor and management will undercut the unions since unions subsist on the notion of class conflict. A constant theme running through the book is that all current theories of industrial renewal are aimed at destroying the unions. This is not true. However, many abuses of union power are being rightly attacked as destructive of economic activity and jobs. Unions have pushed wages up at three times the rate of productivity. Since 1977, unit-labor costs have risen over 57 percent. Unions are pricing their members out of jobs and companies out of business. Capital and labor are cooperative factors of production. American workers have traditionally been the highest paid in the world because they have been the most productive. When that link is broken, both capital and labor suffer. The heresy of the class-conflict model is that it calls for the severance of this link. If unions are to remain viable institutions, they will have to reform their philosophy and support economic progress.

Energy is a vital component of advanced production methods. The in-

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creased cost of this factor of production in the wake of the 1973 OPEC price hike has been a major cause of stagnation in the years since. Economic growth rates among the industrialized nations averaged in 1974-79 only half what they did in 1960-73. The lost production in the OPEC-induced 1974 recession cost the U.S. more than the entire Vietnam War.

"'Nukespeak' is a well-written and disquieting book, richly detailed and fully documented."

—New York Times Book Review

The search for less costly, more secure energy sources is part of the long-term reindustrialization effort. Nuclear power has long been seen as such a source. The authors of *Nukespeak* trace the arguments used by government and industry leaders in support of nuclear power and attempt to show that atomic power was oversold to the public. They coin the word "nukespeak" in imitation of George Orwell's "newspeak" to argue that nuclear proponents have used technical jargon and selective data to advance their cause.

Yet in the process, the authors engage in double-talk of their own. One of the main arguments is that nuclear power has proven uneconomical. It is true that many power companies have canceled plans to build new reactors because of high costs, but are these costs inherent in the technology? Nuclear plants are still being built in Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East and are considered viable. In the U.S. the principle source of increased costs is regulation, making American plants more expensive than those built in other countries. It also takes longer to build an American plant, twice as long as in France for example. As anyone in finance will testify, the longer it takes to complete a project the less attractive it is. The more distant the financial returns, the less they are worth since costs of capital at high interest rates increase the outlay those returns must cover. The antinuclear movement has made no secret of the fact that one of their best tactics is to delay by court suits, bureaucratic red tape, demonstrations, and even sabotage the construction of plants so that this law of finance will convert a profitable project into a loser. This is not the result of the costliness of nuclear power, but the result of opposition to nuclear power. Nuclear power is a technological issue and thus subject to a technological solution. It should not logically become a subject for left-right political debate. That the left has uniformly assaulted it implies an ideological rather than a scientific basis for their opposition.

The argument that nuclear power was oversold as a cure-all could be applied to the authors in regard to their claims for conservation and solar power. They make the valid point that a barrel of oil saved is as good as one produced, but there are limits to what conservation can do, especially if high rates of economic growth are to be restored. Solar power is still 25-50 years away according to figures used by the authors themselves. Solar power plays an interesting part in the environmental movement. It allows critics of growth to attack all existing forms of power generation while still pretending to favor growth and energy development. However, it is not hard to predict that if solar power ever does materialize on a large scale, they will find grounds for attacking it as well. Their gross use of scare tactics proves they will say anything.

If the economy remains stagnant, who will be hurt the most? Walter Williams thinks that it will be minority groups. His *The State Against Blacks* argues that economic opportunity spells social mobility for blacks. While racism exists in many areas, it can be overcome. Jews, Orientals, and the Irish were once

LIBERAL CULTURE

Holey Bonds of Matrimony

Though its primary goals are the promotion of homosexual "rights," hot-tub parties, Marxism, and pornography, the *Village Voice* is also deeply concerned with curbing the nation's obscene divorce rate. Thus in a recent issue *VV* engaged the services of one Martha Hume, whose marriage of 12 full years makes her and her husband "a veritable Abraham and Sarah among married people," to share her "secret for staying married":

> It's simple. Every once in a while . . . run away from home. I've named this practice 'Divorce for a Day.'

The venerable matron adds a minor caveat, though:

> It has to be done right . . . . Every time you leave, there must be a real possibility that you will never return.

Ms. Hume and *VV* are convinced that following her advice will "save almost any marriage." We would bet, rather, on "real possibilities." □

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victims of discrimination but economic success was still theirs in a growing, largely open economy. And in America, economic success overcomes nearly everything else. But it will take more than growth. Blacks will have to be free to grow with the economy. Williams cites numerous examples of how regulations, license requirements, union apprenticeship programs, the minimum wage, and other entry restrictions serve to keep people out of business and off the rungs of the economic ladder. Those at the bottom find such obstacles the hardest to overcome, as Williams makes clear in his case studies on the taxi and trucking industries, the entry to the skilled crafts, and the ill effects of the minimum wage.

Economic recovery from the recession is underway. However, unemployment will remain high because of the decline in the industrial base which is independent of the business cycle. A nation which imports manufactured goods while its own factories and workers sit idle is a nation with fundamental problems. It is production which creates wealth by transforming raw materials into items of value. A nation cannot become wealthy merely by consuming the production of others. If it could, beggars would be kings.

Crises can produce major political realignments—witness the Great Depression, when liberalism began its long reign. Current events could make possible a new coalition of producer interests, both labor and business. Conservatives are the natural catalysts for such a coalition, but if they are to serve in that role, they will have to exercise more realism and imagination than they have thus far.

The Chameleon Papers

***Letters of Archibald MacLeish: 1907 to 1982;* Edited by R. H. Winnick; Houghton Mifflin; Boston.**

by Ronald Berman

In August 1932, while working on *Tender is the Night,* F. Scott Fitzgerald noted in his *Ledger* that "The novel should do this. Show a man who is a natural idealist, a spoiled priest. . . . he is very intelligent, widely read—in fact he has all the talents, including especially great personal charm." For the role of the hero, Dick Diver, Fitzgerald picked a half-dozen models, among them himself, Hemingway, and Archibald MacLeish. Fitzgerald was a natural candidate, given the qualities he had cited; Hemingway had some of those characteristics, too. And, if we are to judge from his letters, MacLeish belonged on any list that included not only charm and intelligence but overdone idealism as well.

Archibald MacLeish had many lives. He was born in 1892, in the generation of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Edmund Wilson—and of Dick Diver, who was given the birth date of 1891. Like Dick Diver, MacLeish went to Yale. After that, at something of a loss and in an effort to please his father, he went to Harvard Law School. He left before his last year in order to serve in a hospital unit in France but returned to stand first in his class. Thereafter, he left the law and became a poet, a critic, a professor of poetry, Librarian of Congress, advisor to Democratic politicians, and a universal literary entrepreneur. He seems to have succeeded as a cultural figure; he did not succeed in the enterprise that mattered most to him, as a poet. Possibly both failure and success were connected to his sense of public self.

R. H. Winnick's edition of the *Letters* is a good one, helping us to understand MacLeish's half-dozen American lives. It is well printed, well bound, intelligently organized. Each letter is followed by (necessary) notes. The index is long and detailed. There are some flaws: the introduction is very short and surprisingly flat; there is no chronology (and this is a book that covers most of a century); there is no essay on the letters' style, content, and meaning. That is unfortunate, considering the events MacLeish experienced, the movements in which he participated, and the people among whom he moved. But the letters themselves are revelatory.

The letters are written on terms of equality to Hemingway and Fitzgerald, to Dean Acheson and Adlai Stevenson. They provide information on MacLeish and his wife, his mother, his students, his friends, and his causes. Some, like the many letters to and in defense of Ezra Pound, are sensible, even noble. They know where Pound is obscure and in what ways he is great—they also know in what ways he failed to comprehend economics, to write good poetry, or to display common sense. Others, like the letters to Hemingway, are something of an embarrassment for a biographer (Winnick is working on the approved life)—or even a psychohistorian—to evaluate. They pander to Hemingway's ego and adopt a special vocabulary full of fake masculinity and certainty. They are, in fact, written in a kind of imitation "Hemingstein." There are two voices in MacLeish. One is capable of saying to Pound at Saint Elizabeth's, "I'm proud to be seen writing to you." A man who says that can be forgiven much. The other voice, much less morally certain, assures Hemingway that he is indeed as good as he thinks he is, that his stories are "goddamn comprehensible. And then too they are swell. They are very swell. Also they have the horsepower." The man who wrote that kind of blather—repeatedly—is not sure of what he has to say, only that he would like to please.

In many instances MacLeish showed himself as a man of decency and intelligence. In others he seemed to be violated by ideas, perhaps because of his overpowering sense of public identity.

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He liked to think of himself as a poet of America and of liberalism. He liked to think that he represented both the Muse and Tom Paine. This led him to underestimate both Pound and Eliot as critics of poetry and of society. Since their ideas were so evidently illiberal and retrograde —they acknowledged human depravity, despaired of human institutions, denied the idea of progress, had no confidence in socialism—he came with fatal ease to the conclusion that those ideas were in some way separable from their work. He himself willingly infused poetry with ideology and believed that the manifestation of sympathy for victims, of universal tolerance, or of confidence in the New Deal would make good poetry. The letters show little self-awareness in this respect. They indicate that he thought his social and political sympathies validated the poetry and that he was deeply puzzled by critics and journalists who responded badly. A sample will do, of the kind of writing that led Edmund Wilson to express lifelong contempt for MacLeish's work. In the course of reviewing the achievement of Faulkner MacLeish wrote the following lines, which imply the connection of *Sanctuary* to the life and times of Joseph McCarthy:

> The impotent that could not—
> That leared with letching eye,
> They've learned to rape the country
> With a corn-cob and a lie.

This shows that MacLeish could learn from Michael Gold—or perhaps from Pete Seeger—but it is neither thought nor poetry.

MacLeish simply could not get away from the belief that he was a Bard—the examples of Whitman and of Carl Sandburg were too much for him. In his letters—as in his poems and essays—MacLeish tended to preach. He was aware of that, as he indicates in a 1949 letter to Henry Luce. The subject is *Time* and its interpretations of American responsibility and freedom during the Cold War. MacLeish states: "More and more as these evil times move toward their utterance—whatever it is to be—I find the spirit and the tongues of the Ministers of the Kirk and Congregational preachers, my ancestors, moving in me." He even invokes possibly the last man on earth to share his beliefs, John Knox. It seems that Fitzgerald was quite accurate in perceiving that MacLeish, among others, had something in him of the "spoiled priest."

MacLeish regularly makes confused statements about the duty of a poet in a time of troubles. There are attacks on Pound and Eliot for their despondent attitude about modern culture; on their academic followers for being insufficiently affirmative; on "the newspaper critics" who could not take his broadcast for the Roosevelt Administration seriously. Perhaps the definitive word on MacLeish's sense of cultural politics has already been written, and is to be found in another collection of letters. Edmund Wilson wrote to Maxwell Geismar in 1942:

> I think, too, that you tend perhaps to overestimate the artistic and intellectual importance of the social-consciousness enthusiasm that mounted so rapidly during the thirties. Aren't MacLeish and Sherwood, whom you cite as well as most of the other people that you mention on page 288 [of *Writers in Crisis*], as well as Steinbeck, perhaps, himself, really second- and third-rate writers? May it not possibly turn out to be true that they represent merely the beginning of some awful collectivist cant which will turn into official propaganda for a post-war state-socialist bureaucracy? With MacLeish and Sherwood at the White House as they are now, the whole thing makes me rather uneasy. It may be necessary for a subsequent set of writers to lead an attack on phony collectivism in the interests of the American individualistic tradition.

In a letter to Ilona Karmel in 1952 MacLeish again invoked his political priesthood: "it is truly to testify we are here—to bear witness—those of us who are artists." There are some qualifications to bear in mind: that MacLeish, as Wilson observed, confused art with politics, and that he attached reverential, indeed religious feelings to secular liberalism. It is of great interest that he can dismiss quite a lot of poetry because it is not liberal-minded: because, like the work of Eliot, it sees evil in human nature and in history. To put that point of view in poetry is for MacLeish unacceptable: it remains for verse to celebrate "love" and "gayety." This is excruciatingly sentimental. It tends also to make poetry socially therapeutic, instrumental. But MacLeish ought to speak for himself on his interpretation of the right stuff:

> We can only truly see, even the best of us, even the greatest, what we love. Those whose lives disgust them may make brilliant play of their hate, and touching pathos of their despair, but they are shrunken witnesses. Eliot, for all his brilliance, is not a great poet for this reason. Yeats, for the same reason, is. And this is Shakespeare's reason. And Keats'. And Dante's for all his cruel darkness—for the tart, sweet savor of life is there even in those supurating pools of hatred—those who are hateful are those who have sinned against life, call it by what name you will.

This is so awful that elucidation hesitates. Such a misreading of *The Divine Comedy* has probably not occurred since God died and Lenin was born. The sinners in Dante, unfortunately, are those who have loved life too much. They are Paolo and Francesca, and those others who loved "love" and "gayety" too much. It is certainly of interest that brilliance and greatness are opposed in this passage, as if only the right ideas could make poetry worthwhile. Not, I think, an improvement on Arnold.

The letters seem to distill MacLeish's cultural politics. Now and then he rises above party, but he sinks in his view of mankind. MacLeish may have been to poetry as Eleanor Roosevelt was to government: he did a discernible amount of

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good, but his ideas were not as useful as his actions. He thought of poetry as if it were a kind of medicine. Cheerfully, stoutheartedly, doing measurable good as he went, MacLeish kept pounding out a mission that flourished and should have died in the thirties. Art was for him something that elevated the spirit of right-thinking people. He was not intellectually equipped to understand differences of opinion, which I take to be the quintessence of modern liberalism. □

Benign Neglect

Don DeLillo: *The Names;* Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

by Joseph Schwartz

Like his previous work, Don DeLillo's seventh novel, *The Names,* will receive more attention from select critics than from the intelligent reading public. It is about time to inquire as to the reason for this. One critic has claimed that DeLillo receives less attention than he should because he writes about aspects of the United States which most readers are unwilling to face. Yet, there are many distinguished writers taken seriously by the intelligent public and critics alike who have regularly said things we dislike hearing. Indeed, the argument could be made that significant writers, by definition, do this. DeLillo himself has suggested that people would rather read "house and yard" fiction (i.e., read about themselves), so as to give significance to their own lives. But "house and yard" has been the staple of fiction, the identifiable middle-class art form, since the 18th century. So we will have to look elsewhere for explanations of reader neglect of DeLillo. *The Names,* since it is typical of his work, is a good place to start.

One point that can be raised is that his invention is not imaginative enough—not enough is at stake. His partisans will take issue with this charge, yet I think it is true and a plausible explanation for the tedium experienced while pushing one's way through the novel. On one level, he appears to be fully inventive. In *The Names* the terrain is the Middle East, Greece, and India. The principal character, James Axton, is a risk analyst for a multinational corporation involved in the risks of war and peace. His marriage is failing. He is caught up in his fascination with a murder cult. Unknowingly, he works for the CIA. God's plenty here it would seem. But, as in the works of Paul Bowles—the writer DeLillo most reminds me of in this novel—the effect is ennui rather than excitement. His invention is not daring enough to make the reader care about anyone or anything that happens. "My life is going by and I can't get a grip on it. It eludes me, it defeats me . . . Nothing adds up." Since this is such a tiresome complaint, worn out with the mere telling by countless 20th-century "heroes" for whom not a tinker's damn is given, one must examine the complaint more carefully. Putting aside all lurking boredom as cleanly as I can and knowing James Axton as well as DeLillo will allow, I still wonder why I should have the slightest concern for him or for his adventures. That "nothing adds up" is a commentary on Axton's witlessness, and not, as it is intended, an indictment of the times. One could place Axton in the orderly world of the Middle Ages or in the fixed primitive society of a South Seas tribe, and the same words would still be muttered. He would be ineffectual in any setting, tight or loose. In a hundred guises he has already bored you at dinner parties, receptions, and other social settings. The annoying murmur is always the same: his life is going by and he cannot get a grip on it. Perhaps he deserves his fate. He is thin—drawn out beyond his ability to bear the pull of such stretching.

The other characters are even less compelling. They have names, but one doesn't get to know them in any human way. They are shadowy and deliberately functional, but the function served is often unclear. Taken together, they are a tiresome lot of expatriates, albeit a new breed. Instead of being abroad for culture (as if that is the only reason why one may ever be abroad), they are there for business purposes. And if they're not business people, they are perennial tourists, or a mixture of both.

> To be a tourist is to escape accountability. Errors and failings don't cling to you the way they do back home. You are able to drift across continents and languages, suspending the operation of sound thought. Tourism is the march of stupidity . . . Being stupid is the pattern, the level and the norm.

Events are shapeless; one belongs to an army of fools. The grey two-dimensional shapes are intentional. DeLillo's own analysis of the deliberate absence of character as we have come to understand the term remains unconvincing to me.

> A lot of characters have become pure act. The whole point in certain kinds of modern writing is that characters simply do what they do. There isn't a great deal of thought or sentiment or literary history tied up in the actions of characters. Randomness is always hard to absorb.

Randomness is not only difficult to absorb, it is precisely what art rebels against. DeLillo's view of character explains why he admires Thomas Pynchon and William Gaddis. In connection with DeLillo's comment, I urge the reader to glance at Saul Bellow's Nobel Prize address, especially noting his view of Alain Robbe-Grillet's comment that characters are obsolete in fiction. The contrast is instructive.

A second reason for DeLillo's failure to win the attention his partisans feel is rightly his can be explained by his misuse of suggestion.

> This is what we bring to the temple,

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> not prayer or chant or slaughtered rams. Our offering is language.

Many readers will puzzle over such a seemingly portentous thought. It must mean something deep, they will say to themselves. It is provocative. How provocative? And then one wonders. Is it as winsome as all that? And then there's this:

> What ambiguity there is in exalted things. We despise them a little.

We can barely get through the second sentence without knowing with certainty that the sentences taken together are meant to be pregnant with meaning. Just what it is we pass over quickly since pause would be fatal. Legend has it that Tallulah Bankhead said to Alexander Woolcott after the opening of a Tagore play, "Dahling, there's much less here than meets the eye." That may be the chief problem with DeLillo's work. Frequently, the reader is led down the garden path, apparently to a climax of some sort—an idea, insight, emotion—but nothing happens. Closure is lacking. I do not mean symmetry, false or true, that characterizes a certain kind of narrative. I mean instead a false dehiscence, the expected development not issuing. The problem is not technical but epistemological. The truncated, the ambiguous, is the most we can know. We guess. Not getting anywhere is precisely what is wanted. For such a writer the periphery is of more significance than the center. Being interested in the center is gauche.

DeLillo has not acquired the audience some critics think he deserves because he has not earned it. He has misunderstood the intelligent reader; the failure is rhetorical. He has, for instance, praised William Gaddis for extending the possibilities of the novel "by taking huge risks and making great demands on his reader." I wonder if the two go together. Great writers have always made great demands on their readers. There is nothing new about that. What I infer DeLillo might mean is that the demands he speaks of are special in some way. Further, from Cervantes to Bellow great writers have taken huge risks, far greater than the surface experimentation of Pynchon, Gaddis, or John Barth. Intelligent readers have always responded to such risk-taking with commendable sympathy and understanding. Do I gather from DeLillo's comment that he would switch the responsibility for the making of art from the writer to the reader? Is the reader somehow to blame for not being "serious" enough? There seems something seriously amiss in the very notion of the writer giving lectures to the reader about his seriousness, especially the 20th-century reader, who has really been astonishingly patient toward the expressive temperaments of writers. To misread one's audience is to display a poor rhetorical sense. The audience should be given more credit for its seriousness and its patience. Perhaps a renewed sense of the audience's worth might bring the writer back from the edge to the center. For instance, in *The Names* it certainly appears as if we are to make something significant of the fact that an anthropologist and a filmmaker lead Axton to the cult of murderers. And, no doubt, many readers could arbitrarily ascribe specific meanings to the two men. But there is little in the text to tell us anything more than "characters simply do what they do." There appears to be no way to validate an interpretation. If this is true, then fiction becomes performance rather than object, and in that shift an enormous change has been made. Few readers, and rightly so, are willing to make such a shift. Consciously or not, they want coherence or at least stability. "Show us their faces, tell us what they said." Including this criticism of himself for his failure to do this in the novel does not modify the urgency of its claim on our most essential selves as readers.

DeLillo refers to his novel as a "Text." I do not know if he intends by this to link his work with the now-diminishing fad of poststructuralism and deconstruction. But, in fact, he does create this relationship and, further, he does hint that language is his subject. The subject of his "text" must now be considered. "How do you connect things? Learn their names." It is my speculation that modern nominalism is at the base of his "text"—what exists exists in name only.

> The word in India has enormous power. Not what people mean but what they say. Intended meaning is beside the point. The word itself is all that matters.

Axton's "second life" (true life?) is this book he writes about himself, the life which language creates (not reflects). "Do whatever your tongue finds to do." Misspellings are exhilarating because they make us see words anew, "what they really were": ancient, secret but reshapable. This notion clearly goes along with the idea of fiction as performance. What there is to be performed (the performance itself) changes with the performer, whose whole effort is to be interesting, to be of interest at any cost. Self-expression: "a final distillation of the self." It is of consequence, I think, that one of the characters says:

> In this century the writer has carried on a conversation with madness. We might also say of the twentieth-century writer that he aspires to madness. Some have made it, of course, and they hold special places in our regard. To a writer, madness is a final distillation of the self,

"'The Names' . . . is a dense, brilliant, ultimately rather elusive meditation."
—*New York Times Book Review*

"[DeLillo] outdoes himself . . . with considerable wit and style. Yet we've barely scratched the surface of this fine novel. . . . some of the best writing DeLillo has ever done."
—*The Nation*

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> a final editing down. It's the drowning out of false voices.

The final distillation of being has something to do with "language is the deepest meaning." Be yourself; that is what counts. Get free; become ecstatic. Histrionics caused by ecstasy. "A blind might" shakes things, and there is no one to blame or credit for the "worst of the terror."

The terror James Axton comes into contact with is the murder cult, which has no purpose except terror and the bringing of death. Victims are selected because their initials are the same as the initials of the place where the murder will be done. The killings are ritualistic and arbitrary. The members of the modern-day cult are "secular monks"; they do not kill for human motives like honor or revenge. Their home is the desert because it has no history. They do the terrible and decisive thing—they kill. "They follow you like a crooked shadow." The cult matches letters only; it intends nothing. But it means, nevertheless, that the only way to contend with death has become death. These arbitrary killings "mock our need to structure and classify, to build a system against terror in our souls." Yet the members of the cult must have been at one time ordinary people just like Axton and his acquaintances. Still, the cultists devote their life to producing death. Our saving grace as persons is that we know—alone of all animals—that we will die. "The final denial of our base reality, in this schematic, is to produce a death. . . . A needless death. A death by system, by machine-intellect."

All this becomes clear when Axton discovers that he has been unknowingly working for the CIA all along. Everything about the cult can now be referred to the CIA. The CIA is the system gone mad, an arbitrary death-dealing cult. One must work backwards a bit at this point. "America is the world's living myth." As such, it must accommodate what people need. We must absorb "the impact of their grievances." After this shrewd analysis, DeLillo arbitrarily makes the point that most of their grievances are justified. The U.S. is the most highly developed country technologically, and the people who "bring technology are the death dealers." Technicians bring new kinds of death with them. Kathryn, Axton's wife, tells him that the United States is the theme of the corruption of the innocent. Americans contaminate; "the theme of cancer and its spread." Although naively believing in its own innocence, the United States chooses strategy over principle every time in its dealings with others. Hence, the great significance given to the CIA:

> If America is the world's living myth, then the CIA is America's myth. All the themes are there, in tiers of silence, whole bureaucracies of silence, in conspiracies and doublings and brilliant betrayals. The agency takes on shapes and appearances, embodying whatever we need at a given time to know ourselves or unburden ourselves.

The mistake Axton makes, letting himself be used by the Agency, justifies Kathryn's bitter description of him as "politically neuter." He feels more culpable than those who knowingly carried out their designs. Whatever narrative the book contains ends with Axton's resignation. The last word is given to a brief section from his son, Tap. Tap, nine years old, writes of a prairie boy who wants to speak in the spirit's voice but cannot. He dreams of another world, the country of his heart. He wishes to free himself from the dreadful woe of the coming world lit by lightening. Like Huck Finn, he runs. He runs however to "the nightmare of real things, the fallen wonder of the world." For anyone who ever wondered what happened to Huck, here's the answer in this pessimistic conclusion.

DeLillo's naive analysis of what happened to the promise of America and the extraordinary burden he places on the CIA as a symbol of our death will strike sensitive readers as overdone, willful, mistaken, and unfair. Fortunately, it is much more opaque in the novel than in the tentative analysis I offer above. The expression of DeLillo's loss of faith is irresponsible. We Americans are not the monsters he portrays. We are the members (and creators) of the best of the open societies in existence. Our imperfections appear larger than they are because our achievement is so huge. To have what we stand for symbolized by the notion of death is an outrage. □

Art Is Elitist & Other Impolite Observations

Peter Uwe Hohendahl: *The Institution of Criticism;* Cornell University Press; Ithaca, NY.

by Gary S. Vasilash

One hundred years ago, German writers such as Goethe and Schiller had a profound influence on writers in English-speaking countries. The criticism of such men shaped, to a certain extent, the critical discourse in Britain and America, to say nothing of their homeland. Perhaps the only German who has an abiding effect on contemporary criticism—as well as on seemingly all else—is Karl Marx. Marx is always trotted out for his views on a particular subject, and if he didn't make a direct statement about the subject in question, then his "interpreter" takes one from another topic and, through a bit of equivocation, makes it apply: a monograph entitled "Karl Marx on *1984*" can be expected to emerge at any moment—if it hasn't already rolled

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from the presses. There is one thing that operators in the Marx industry tend to have in common: an inability to write clearly. Most of the interpretations are so opaque that anyone who spends even the shortest amount of time with them is driven back to the source. Upon arriving at, say, *Kapital* (*Grundrisse* is gaining popularity lately), one finds not something resembling a fiery call to arms (as those who promote it but haven't read it would have it), but what would now be considered the grafting of an economics textbook onto a turgid sociological dissertation. Given that work, I suspect that many of the so-called interpreters are forced to produce obfuscations because they wish to blanket the fact that they put *Kapital* down with its pages in the condition of a kissed, fondled, but otherwise intact virgin. Certain quotes appear with such frequency in the various secondary and tertiary texts that one could get the impression that Marx was the author of a few gnostic passages, not a man who displayed symptoms of terminal logorrhea. There can be no doubt that Marx had *something* to say. However, it's more evident that (a) many self-proclaimed Marxists accept his word with a faith that is a parody of that of the believers whom they revile and (b) whatever Marx had to say has been filtered to such a degree that entropy, not purity, is the result. Marx was known to have said that it didn't matter if the workers understood him, that it was only important that the intelligentsia did. His back-door epigones have taken this approach one step further, into the realm of near-incomprehensibility.

Peter Uwe Hohendahl is a German and presumably a Marxist. The essays collected in *The Institution of Criticism* (with the exception of the Introduction) were written in German between 1970 and 1977. Although they primarily deal with the history of and difficulties in the state of criticism in West Germany, the essays actually have a wider audience. Hohendahl states, "They address themselves . . . to the crucial question of what the task of criticism could be in the context of an advanced capitalistic industrial society." Therefore, while specific details differ, the general thesis applies to the state of several countries, including the United States.

Conventionally, people in advanced capitalist countries don't talk about or don't think about an existent state of affairs. On the one hand, there are those who think themselves polite and egalitarian and so the subject is taboo; on the other there are those for whom it is so obvious that it doesn't bear mention. Those who do talk about it tend to be of one breed of Marxist or another, and thus they are able to make a big bang with a popgun. It doesn't take a Marxist or a structuralist to recognize that there is a tripartite division in advanced capitalist societies. There are the upper, middle, and lower classes; highbrows, middlebrows, and lowbrows. Finer rules can be used, but three works well for general purposes. Those on top, of course, are the elites. Separation doesn't exclusively depend on the economic base, or wealth; education (and not necessarily just in institutions of learning) is not to be overlooked. The elites generate the ideas, concepts, mores, and even mere slogans that are eventually

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture*:

The Return of God

"Why we gave the Nobel Prize to Mr. Pablo Neruda and Gabriel García Márquez, both political fellow-travelers, awarded the Nobel Prize to Francois Mauriac, the committed writer, the Prize-winners, who find their political faith [illegible] at the other end of the spectrum. Can anyone imagine the Nobel Committee awarding the Prize to Ezra Pound, that most profound and discriminating critic of the modern world? Since in this context and the driver's reaction is subjective and not [illegible] Yet the ideologies and inflations of Neruda and García Márquez are [illegible] do its inquirers from those of the Ezra Pound? One must ask: How important is a writer's political commitment in judging his art? Is it profoundly important which side one is on? Is this most [illegible] change? Each artist must be held accountable for his ideas."

—from "Dwarfing Giants"
by Mary Ellen Foster

Also:

Opinions & Views—Communiqués—In Focus—Perceptibles—Vaste of Money—The American Prosecutor—State—Science—Art—Music—Correspondence—Liberal Culture—Social Register—Journalism—In My Solitude

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taken up by the lower two strata. This is not to make a qualitative distinction overall, for it is true that techniques from the lowest stratum (in areas of agriculture and medicine, for example) have proven themselves to be most valuable. Basically, then, what exists is a state wherein there are producers and facilitators on the top, consumers in the middle, and those more concerned with sustenance than anything else on the bottom.

Works of art emerge from the top level. Even if a housewife in Iowa pens a novel, it must go up to the top before it can descend. Still, said housewife is an exception. Writers who want to become bona fide writers on the macroscopic scale (i.e., as opposed to writing a column for a weekly newspaper or even a romantic supermarket novel) put themselves —or attempt to put themselves—into the elite category through some kind of sacrifice. This is one of the reasons behind the stereotype of the starving artist. It also helps account for the fact that a notable number of authors who have put themselves on top—Hemingway is a prime example—have such difficult lives in general. Clearly, this stratification isn't "fair" if by that word one means "equal." But as is well known but ignored, all aren't produced equally; the making is the same, but the results differ. Postnatal factors such as the environment and the opportunities afforded to the individual are also influential. Material differences can be ameliorated. Art is a different story. That is, since the start of the Industrial Revolution, the plight of the proletariat in capitalist countries has been improved, at least inasmuch as machinery has been designed and constructed to do a number of jobs that are, in a sense, inhumane. One of the objectives of many industrialists is to build totally automatic factories (this just isn't a ploy by greedy capitalists who wish to improve their profits by getting rid of the worker; even the manufacturing engineers in the "worker's paradise" are attempting to create the required systems). Today, automatic machines are producing things from wristwatches to bombs with minimal human intervention. Those machines are improvements. What about art? According to J. Dudley Andrew, in an essay entitled "The Structuralist Study of Narrative: Its History, Use, and Limits,"* machines can become authors. That is, in a discussion of Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale,* Andrew notes, "Given the morphological rules he discovered, a computer could generate a tale which would be at least formally correct." The words *at least* are key. There is an ineffable difference between what a human *creates* and what a machine *generates.*

Consider Michelangelo. In his day, things were out in the open. The Medicis wanted something, so they commissioned it. They had the capital, Michelangelo had the means of production. He painted, designed, and sculpted. If the Medicis had something else in mind, it was made clear. They paid the bill. Certainly the nonelites—even to this day—didn't mind the gracious fruits of Michelangelo's work, but they weren't his primary concern: they didn't pay his bills. Things seemed to change in the 18th century, marked most famously by Pope and most precisely by Johnson. The middle class didn't exactly supplant the patron; to a certain extent it became the patron (i.e., foundations, corporations, and universities continue to underwrite art). Sometimes, a work of art is both elitist and popular: Charles Dickens certainly had a popular following and merits critical acclaim; Saul Bellow has produced books that are marketed through book clubs yet which will endure long after book clubs are considered to be as quaint as Victorian lending libraries. For the most part, however, there isn't this happy confluence. That is, in this century, one of the most "deliberate" artists was James Joyce. Clearly, his books aren't for the masses (they must even be *assigned* in universities and most professors are still skittish about *Finnegans Wake*) and Joyce knew it. He also regularly complained about monetary problems throughout his letters. Another, more extreme, example is Ezra Pound, who was driven to bizarre rantings about financiers. Even today, when Pound's—dare I say—*stock* is high in the literary marketplace, his *Cantos* are published by New Directions, not a giant house. From a purely financial standpoint, Joyce and Pound would have undoubtedly done better by opening up an ad agency. Certainly, they knew that. But they took risks for art. All of these writers—Dickens, Bellow, Joyce, Pound—were (or are) free men. Writers and other artists living in free societies can make choices. But freedom, as cannot be overstressed, is not license to do one's own thing. There are boundaries, rules, and conventions in the realm of art just as there are in civilized societies as a whole. That is, a writer could put crazed scrawlings all over sheets and perhaps even get some small press to publish them in quarto form. Chances are, both the writer and publisher would go hungry if they sustained that sort of activity for any length of time.

Artists are elitists but they still must earn their livelihoods. Artists, then, are employees. In any working relationship the employer must determine if the prospective employee will provide a suitable return on investment. For example, an established liberal publisher would be unlikely to print and promote the works of a Polish Catholic philosopher. However, if that philosopher was once known only by the name Karol Wojtyla and is now Pope John Paul II, then there is sales potential and the presses roll. The publisher (an elite) must answer to the market (the middle). But, as stated earlier, as an elite he helps mold that market. That is, publishers tend to be those who have amassed or who control capital sufficiently substantial to permit taking a financial beating when money-losers are printed. Generally, money-losers are those books geared to elites, the smallest segment of the market (of

*In *The Horizon of Literature*; University of Nebraska Press, 1982.

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course, bad books tend to flop, but they are not a part of this discussion). Eventually, the messages conveyed to the elites by these books will make their way down to the middle and possibly further. Thus, eventually, the plastic market is molded. If a writer seeks employment, then it behooves him to go to a publisher with whom he is—or can be—in concert. Does this then mean that writers are toadies? In Eden, the answer would be yes. In an advanced capitalistic society where there is freedom of choice, the answer is no.

Hohendahl's concern is primarily the role of the critic. If, as claimed, the artist must give in to a patron or publisher, then it's fairly certain that the critic, the writer of secondary texts, must give in even more. Fairly certain but not true—at least not as long as the state isn't the sole publisher. Hohendahl provides a curious history of the role of the critic. Once a champion of the reading public, the critic is now a lickspittle. The biggest contribution of the Frankfurt School (i.e., Adorno, Horkheimer, et al.) to socioliterary discourse is the term *culture industry.* It has an ominous ring, particularly for those who don't like to mention the stratification of society. It brings to mind the image of a bloated, rapacious industrialist who is insanely laughing as he cranks the handle on a machine from which novels, paintings, films, etc. emerge. Hohendahl claims that "literary criticism has become an appendix of the culture industry." He states, "We cannot expect any interest on the part of the media industry in democratizing cultural production and reception, since this industry considers the population as an object to be administered and not a participant in the discussion." ("Democratizing cultural production" means, of course, that everyone would be equipped with or have access to pencils, paper, mimeograph machines, television equipment, etc. for the creation and criticism of "people's" art.) In Hohendahl's rendition of the status quo, those running the culture industry dominate and force-feed the public. Critics are no more than vestiges within the bodies of the industrialists. No one has his appendix removed unless it causes some trouble. Similarly, the critic can remain in his slot as long as he doesn't disturb the digestive area of the industrialist. To a certain extent this is true: no conservative journal is going to print a panegyric to Stalin, nor will a liberal review promote the ideas of Edmund Burke. While this seems rather evident, it is treated in works like the one under consideration as an astonishing revelation and as an indictment. It should be neither. Just as Michelangelo was able to create art while under a commission, critics can—and do—write honest assessments of works. Some don't, but then they aren't critics; they are publicists. Talk about the seemingly unlimited power of the culture industry is just so much bunk: no matter how much ink and money are used to grease the rails, pigs still can't be made to fly—they may soar for a while, but then . . .

Critics are under strict, though often tacit, guidelines that are imposed by members of the elite group. But this isn't, Marxist fulminations notwithstanding, a difficult concept for anyone in a free, advanced capitalistic society to understand: even a worker of the lowest class knows that he must not tell his boss to stuff it if he wants to retain his job. If a critic considers his role to be something other than that of a flack (or a vermiform appendix) and if he discovers that the guidelines in a particular situation force him to become one, then he will leave that situation and find a suitable platform from which he can express his views. Perhaps he will be unable to find one, but he does have a choice. The case is considerably different in societies where *partiynost, narodnost,* or the like are the rule—enforced by the threat of an open-ended stay at a gulag. In such places artists and critics are indeed treated as mere appendages that can be readily amputated. And there the elite nature of true art is made all the more evident by the production of mass "people's" art. □

LIBERAL CULTURE

The Way We Are?

Here are some titles and subtitles of recent movies, and examples of how they are advertised in America's heartland for the mass consumption of the young, the mature, and the aged:

Feelin' Up

Monty Python: The Meaning of Life—'Sex. Sacrilege. Scatology . . . An exhilarating experience!' [This is an opinion of a *Time* magazine reviewer, used in a printed advertisement].

Flashdance—'It's as far as you can go!' [from the promotion copy].

You've come a long way (on the road to the trash can) civilization, baby . . . □

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Traveling By Stationary Bicycle

Charles Hatch Stoddard: *Looking Forward;* Macmillan; New York.

Louis Galambos: *America at Middle Age: A New History of the United States in the Twentieth Century;* McGraw-Hill; New York.

by John C. Caiazza

A law school professor I know once opined that what the law in the United States could really use was complete eradication so that it could be started over. He was dissatisfied with the growth and myriad complexities of the law as it exists in our modern age—appeals, precedents, judges' opinions, new legal doctrines, and new laws—always and exponentially, new laws. The professor's opinion is shared by others, and not just with regard to the law, but with regard to other aspects of our modern society as well, including the arrangements of our polity, our economy, our culture, and even our Constitution. There is, in fact, a general sense that our present political arrangements are not serving us, that we have gone about as far as possible under the old way of doing things. The author of *America at Middle Age,* Louis Galambos, a history professor at Johns Hopkins, is inclined to accept the present state of stasis, however, arguing that, after all, the American system presently does what it was designed to do, and that any spastic efforts to get it to do more will only result in the political equivalent of muscle strain or heart attack. He sees the limitations of American government as comparable to those of a man reaching middle age, and says that the best thing to do when stiffness and shortness of breath begin to creep in is not to try to do too much, but to learn to enjoy the benefits of middle age. Charles Hatch Stoddard, an environmentalist and former government bureaucrat, is the author of *Looking Forward: Planning America's Future,* and he, on the other hand, thinks that middle-aged America ought to go on a diet, run six miles a day, get into est, and find a guru. Otherwise, he says, our society is headed for the equivalent of a fatal heart attack at 50.

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It is interesting that each writer—in reaching for an analog for the present state of American society—uses the notion of middle age, which, of course, refers to a particular stage in the life of a human being. Indeed, Galambos bases his entire account of America in the last 100 years on this comparison, while Stoddard occasionally uses the concept of maturity to describe America in the present day. There is an obvious difficulty with using the analogy of human growth to describe a society, namely that middle age in a human being is a prelude to old age, which is a prelude to death. While civilizations may be said to rise and fall, this does not happen in the same way that human beings are born and die. The process is not as predictable for civilizations as it is for humans.

There is, as it happens, a less homely and more sophisticated theory available, which can be found in the work of an 18th-century Italian historian, Giambattista Vico: his famous *ricorsi.* In Vico's thought, there are three stages any civilization goes through: the divine, the heroic, and the human. This series is repeated over and over again, in different forms, by different and successive civilizations. Since *ricorsi* postulates a repeatable cycle, it can therefore account for the continuity of a race or a culture throughout the rises and demises of attendant civilizations more readily than a simple analogy with the organic life cycle. In a sense, Vico's *ricorsi* is a spiral—rather than a closed circle ending in death—allowing for a complete 360-degree cycle of birth, growth, death, which yet leaves a space between the beginning and the end points for a start of another complete cycle. Applying Vico's concept to the history of America lets us see that America is not necessarily declining or in middle age, but may simply be spiraling its way into modernity. If it is, then it is most notable for both itself and for all other nations: America is the first really completely modern nation, and whatever declines or stases we suffer will be suffered by other nations after us.

Galambos, in tracing the development of the United States in the 20th century, picks out two threads that lead to the current crisis of modernity: the rise of professions and something he calls the "triocracy." He sees the rise of professions—legal, medical, bureaucratic, academic, and many other categories and subcategories—as a consequence and manifestation of the complexity of our age. Each of the professions is an occupational specialty requiring advanced training, but it is also an organization that serves the advantage of its membership, i.e., an interest group. For the second thread, he describes the rise of triocracy (first mentioned, as far as I know, by Tom Bethell in *Harper's*) as a central feature of Federal governance. "Triocracy" designates a three-sided structure: an interest group itself (usually of a particular profession but not always, e.g., farmers, college students, or the military); the officials within the Federal bureaucracy who are responsible for administering the programs which affect the interest group (e.g., the Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Student Financial Assistance, the Department of Defense); and finally the legislators and legislative staffers who make the bills and appropriations that fund the activities of the interest group (e.g., the House Committee on Agriculture, the Senate Committee on Welfare and Culture, the defense committees of both Houses of Congress). The three parts of each triocracy interlock, none moving without the approval

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of the other two. The effects of the existence of hundreds of these triocracies in the Federal polity is that almost all Federal legislation and policy is pressured in the direction favorable to the interest of each triocracy singly *rather than to the interest of the nation as a whole,* and that major change in a triocracy's area of interest is very difficult to accomplish. This explains why even when change is obviously necessary, it still is very difficult to effect (why, for instance, we pay farmers not to grow food, why student loans cannot be cut, and why there are "cost plus" arrangements with defense contractors), which in turn explains the sense of cynicism and frustration that characterizes the mood of the American people today.

What happens when the government will not respond to the needs of a large enough group of citizens? A reform movement, or simply a "movement" will emerge. It can be as spastic and unplanned as a ghetto riot or as sophisticated and deliberate as the environmentalist movement, and it can encompass a populism of the right as well as of the left. What Galambos calls "highly charged, emotional movements which [seek] extreme solutions to America's problems" are now a feature of our political modernity. There have been several such movements in the last 20 years—anti-Vietnam War protests, the civil-rights movement, feminism, ghetto riots, the nuclear-freeze movement, the rise of the New Left, the ecology movement, and the tax revolt. In each case, a popular revolt against government policy or perceived government inaction went beyond the ordinary channels of our representative democracy in an attempt to make its point. While each of these movements may have attempted to lobby legislatures, influence executives, or argue their case before the courts, they counted mainly on a surge of public opinion and on the organization of mass action for their effectiveness. They all relied on the media, particularly television, to convince the American public of something: if not the justice of their case, then at least the intensity of their desire. Galambos suggests that these movements are a thing of the past, a last menopausal fling before settling down to complacent middle age.

Other facts suggest the contrary, however; given the lethargy of the triocratic system as Galambos describes it, we may well see more of these movements in the future than we have in the recent past. Indeed, the impatience of would-be reformers has increased to the point where their critical eye has turned from the specific areas of their concern to the system which resists reform. Their aim has now become one of reforming that system's way of making decisions and responding to the demands of its citizens, and what they want is essentially a great simplification. This usually means eliminating those levels of government and interests subsidiary to the Federal or national level, and, further, simplifying Federal decision-making by subordinating the legislative branch to the executive. This is particularly true these days of ecologists, conservationists, and other "little-earthers."

Charles Hatch Stoddard is one of these, and he is worth analyzing as an example of a new form of political extremism which can be called eco-radicalism. Typical of eco-radicals, Stoddard begins with a vision of ecological apocalypse—poisoned rivers, eroded farm lands, toxic air, mounds of garbage —the whole bag of eco-disasters. The political result of such a scenario, says

Stoddard, will be the "Invocation of martial law followed by the establishment of a police state." To prevent this, we need to start a movement, but one such as we have never seen before, one that will insist on necessary reforms and which will change the policies of misguided government; *Looking Forward* is a catalog, as well as a call to arms, delineating the necessary reforms. Stoddard recommends changes in national governance, including budget allocations and foreign policy. There is an occasional good suggestion, but more generally obvious is Stoddard's weakness in the face of the totalitarian temptation. Thus, he speaks of "antiquated theories of states' rights, home rule, and suburban autonomy." It might seem that this sentence is merely the result of the reformer's frustration, but Stoddard really means it. Typical of eco-radicalism at its worst, he concludes one chapter with this statement: "In the biological world, gregarious ants and honeybees systematically organize their clustered communities in harmony with natural ecosystems. For human settlements to survive and sustain themselves, they must do the same." No thanks. I'd rather live in a toxic waste dump as free man than in an ecologically balanced ant colony.

This weakness toward totalitarianism stains Stoddard's view of American foreign policy, too. In fact, both Galambos and Stoddard think that our foreign policy should accommodate rather than oppose revolutionary reform movements in other countries. Both authors think that our opposition to communism is wrong, that it is simply an attempt to protect our foreign markets and is based on a simplistic ethic that sees communism as evil and the American way of life as good. What escapes both men is their own ethical simplism that accepts the rationalization of socialist totalitarianism as being nothing more than reform movements representing good, as opposed to the entrenched right-wing regimes symbolizing evil. They share the blind spot that blots out the most fearsome aspect of our modernity, the battle

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between freedom and totalitarianism.

Is this, then, what the shape of modernity will be, our government an arteriosclerotic behemoth standing precariously in the middle of a wasteland of decay and rubble, across which the hot winds of mass movements furiously blow, our shores washed by a bitter totalitarian sea? Such a picture is bleak, desolate of hope or human features, but much still depends on how supple our government remains. In a media-dominated age, with triocracies stubbornly resistant, the mass of our citizens feeling powerless, and our foreign policy determined by ethical simplisms, the perceived responsiveness of the Federal government to the needs and demands of its citizens is critically important. Oddly, there is one fact that each book touches but neither grasps, namely that the best indication that the Federal government can be made responsive has been the moderate success (so far) of President Ronald Reagan. His is the only administration that has even come close to overriding the wishes of at least some triocracies, slowing entitlements, and reversing the recent decline in America's power. All of which means that for conservatives to desert Reagan now, as some threaten to do, would both be dangerous and foolish. □

Stardust Memories

Hamilton Jordan: *Crisis: The Last Year of the Carter Presidency;* G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York.

by Stephen J. Sniegoski

In the not-too-distant past, the United States bestrode the world like a Colossus. Its power was respected and other countries sought its friendship. Over the years this position of power ebbed away to the point where the United States was utterly impotent in the face of a blatant act of aggression by a third-rate power like Iran. While this decline was the result of the combined effects of numerous causes, the nadir to which America sank during the last years of the Carter Presidency must be related to that Administration's foreign policy, whose goal seemed to be the enfeeblement of American power.

The Carter Administration came into office rejecting the basic premises of post-World War II American foreign policy—i.e., the need to contain Soviet communism—which had served to justify America's military might and global presence. Of course, this rejection of "containment" and of American power was not something novel; it simply conformed to the thinking of the American liberal establishment, whose outlook had been shaped by the traumas of Vietnam.

Carter pledged in his May 1977 speech at Notre Dame that American foreign policy would no longer be predicated on an "inordinate fear of Communism." Instead of perceiving the Soviet Union as inherently aggressive and threatening to the West, the Carter Administration saw it as fundamentally a status quo power, only taking militant measures in response to perceived threats. Thus, no effort was made to match the accelerating Soviet arms buildup, nor was any attempt made to counter Soviet expansionist activities in Africa, where its proxy Cuban troops were described as a "force for stability" by Andrew Young, Carter's Ambassador to the United Nations. The Carter Administration seemed to believe that self-emasculation was America's best defense. To replace the traditional containment policy, the Carter Administration promised devotion to the transcendent goals of social justice and human rights. No longer would the United States back unsavory allies on the wrong side of the "forces of change." Thus, the Carter Administration jettisoned pro-American governments in Iran and Nicaragua, and attempted to befriend leftist, anti-American, and even pro-Soviet regimes in Africa.

The validity of this liberal foreign-policy perspective was severely damaged and—in the eyes of many Americans—utterly discredited by the twin shocks of 1979: the Iranian seizure of American hostages and the massive Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The hostage issue dramatically illustrated the importance of military power and the dire consequences stemming from a lack of it. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was hardly in keeping with the image of a pacific status quo power, and, by threatening the Persian Gulf oil lifeline of the West, showed that, unless checked by countervailing American power, Soviet dominance of the West was a possibility, if not a likelihood.

In response to these shocks and to the American public's reaction to them, the Carter Administration began to take measures out of tune with the liberal foreign-policy paradigm—the Carter Doctrine, a grain embargo against the Soviet Union, draft registration, increases in military spending—which, in fact, seemed to be a return to the traditional policy of containment. The question remained, however, whether these actions represented a fundamental shift in President Carter's thinking, or were merely cosmetic, election-year attempts to placate an aroused American public demanding assertive measures.

Some light is shed on this question by Hamilton Jordan's firsthand account of the last year of the Carter Presidency. Although a foreign-policy neophyte with the media image of an arrogant rube, Jordan was in an ideal vantage point (Assistant to the President and White House Chief of Staff) to record Carter's thinking, having been a close confidant since 1966.

The book focuses on two issues with which Jordan was intimately involved:

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he was personally engaged in secret negotiations for the release of the hostages, and he helped to direct Carter's campaign for reelection. Although he provides copious details on these activities, Jordan fails to provide much analysis or even to deal with broad issues. But *Crisis* does provide insight about the Carter Administration's foreign-policy outlook, though it is often more revealing by what it doesn't say than by what it actually presents. It indicates that while Carter did not discuss foreign policy in broad, conceptual terms, he unreflectingly retained the same liberal foreign-policy perspective with which he entered office, little changed by the impact of events. This unchanged outlook was evident in the hostage issue, where Jordan shows Carter to be preeminently concerned about preserving the lives of the captive Americans. The watchword was restraint, with both Carter and Jordan fearing that the American people might become so frustrated as to demand a militant solution. There was no apparent concern that the failure to punish Iran for this heinous crime might encourage other countries to capture American diplomats or to harm American interests in other ways. In fact, neither Carter nor Jordan demonstrated any awareness that the United States had suffered a grievous wrong—that for a country to seize another's diplomats was an act of war. Thus, in his fruitless, secret negotiations Jordan was almost completely on the defensive, while the Iranians harangued the United States for its alleged crimes.

While the book makes little mention of Afghanistan, since Jordan was not personally involved in that issue, the information provided presents no evidence that Carter was greatly troubled by the Soviet threat to American security. About Afghanistan, Carter told Jordan that "It raises grave questions about Soviet intentions and destroys any chance of getting the SALT treaty through the Senate. And that makes the prospects of nuclear war even greater." To Carter, apparently, the concern for good relations with the Soviet Union still overrode the containment of Soviet expansionism.

Jordan recognizes that American foreign policy appeared inept and impotent during Carter's last year in office. And it was the failure to settle the hostage issue, he believes, that was the crucial cause of Carter's reelection defeat. Yet, even today, Jordan (like Carter in 1980) is unable to make any connection between the problems during that terminal year and the foreign policy that had been pursued during the three previous years and which had caused the loss of American power and prestige, making such catastrophes almost inevitable. Jordan, in fact, describes key elements of that foreign policy—the Panama Canal Treaties, the actions of Andrew Young in "making friends for America in the Third World," and the human-rights policy—as great successes. The dire problems of that last year he attributes solely to bad luck.

Unlike Jordan and Carter, the American people viewed their country's foreign-policy problems as symptomatic of something far deeper than bad luck. They sought a reorientation that they correctly recognized would not be provided by the incumbent administration. In electing Ronald Reagan, the American people believed they were choosing a President who held no illusions about the Soviet threat and who would pursue a self-confident, assertive foreign policy.

Unfortunately, the Reagan Administration has not lived up to its promise in foreign policy. However, while the Reagan Administration is hardly blameless, part of the cause must be attributed to a shift in public opinion. To make the American people aware of the importance of power required the dramatic jolt of 1979. As the memory of these events recedes into the background, and without comparable new crises, the American people, guided by the liberal media establishment, have largely forgotten the lessons these events vividly presented. Thus, once more emerges the refrain to cut military spending, eliminate nuclear weapons, abandon territory to pro-Soviet forces, negotiate with "peaceful" Soviet leaders. Perhaps new crises are required before the American people really awaken to their plight. Unfortunately, these might bring down not only the incumbent administration, but the American republic itself. □

Uncritical Caresses

Joan Givner: *Katherine Anne Porter: A Life;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

Paul Mariani: *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked;* McGraw-Hill; New York.

by Linda Thorne

I have a friend who, having recently undergone therapy of the encounter-group variety, tends to treat every conversation in the same context. These interactions often take the form of mild interrogations during which innumerable questions are asked about family, friends, and "interpersonal relationships." These dialogues can be uncomfortable; they are inevitably tedious and annoying. Changing the subject amounts to "emotional defensiveness" and wishing to avoid the topic altogether is anathema. Ours has become a society of instant intimacy, in which new acquaintances and near strangers think nothing of reciting the details of their lives and assume that we are interested both in listening and in reciprocating. My new upstairs neighbor came down one evening to introduce himself and then sat

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down, saying: "I want to tell you the story of my life." He proceeded into the early hours of the morning, long after the wine was gone and my interest with it, reciting a series of events strung together with too many "and thens." These mindless and morbid probings are distasteful enough in our everyday life; they become more so when they find their way into art. In Paul Mazursky's film *An Unmarried Woman,* there is a scene in which Alan Bates, in the full bloom of new love, says to Jill Clayburgh: "I want to know everything about you." The audience could breathe a sigh of relief that, given the usual cinematic time constraints, the lover's wish would not be fulfilled. The reader of Joan Givner's *Katherine Anne Porter: A Life* is not so fortunate. Givner's unabashed admiration for her subject is something like that of the new lover in the height of passion: noncritical with an unending tendency to dwell on minutiae.

In themselves, the facts of Katherine Anne Porter's life are interesting. Born into an impoverished Texas family and uneducated in the traditional sense, she went on to become one of the finest literary stylists of her own, or any, day. Once she left her home state, she rarely returned to it. Instead, she lived in a series of stimulating places during periods of particularly high excitement. She was in Greenwich Village at the time of the Volstead Act, Boston during the Sacco and Vanzetti affair, Mexico City during the Obregón Revolution. She was in Berlin when Hitler rose to power; on at least one occasion her escort was Hermann Goering. From Germany she traveled to Paris, where she lived for four years before the outbreak of World War II. Porter had four husbands, countless lovers, and, though she yearned to have a child, died childless. Given to poor health, she was near death on several occasions yet lived to be 90 years old.

The facts of Katherine Anne Porter's life aren't uninteresting; the telling of them is. Whatever Givner has discovered about Porter is in the book. Porter's life is here, by days, months, weeks, and years—all 90 of them. Episode after episode is recounted, none seemingly more important than another. Certain situations repeat themselves: love affairs gone wrong, hospital stays, trips to exotic places, expensive shopping sprees, periods of being unable to write. The account of Porter's first marriage, at age 15 to 27-year-old John Henry Koontz, differs little from the account of her fourth and last, at age 48 to 26-year-old Albert Erskine. Givner writes of the Porter-Koontz marriage:

> It seems quite likely that the two young people, both totally unprepared for marriage, drawn together for the most unsubstantial of reasons—physical attraction and, on Porter's side, a desperate need for financial and emotional stability—found themselves swiftly disappointed and pushed each other into outrageous acts.

Of the Porter-Erskine union, she says:

> No marriage can have been based on slighter knowledge. The partners had known each other for eight months, but during that time they had spent only a few weekends together. The letters had served not to deepen their knowledge of each other but to obscure it. Porter refused to take stock of the age difference between them and Erskine did not even know how old she was. . . . The marriage was a total and unmitigated disaster, and she knew it to be so on the day it began. She said it ended on the day they were married and the rest was just appearances, the first summer being a long season of rain, terrible heat, and terrible, suffocating unhappiness. There were violent rows in which Erskine would vent his rage by driving at terrifyingly high speeds. Porter, if she was beside him, would fear for her life.

Porter's "obscuring" the facts to Erskine—and to everyone else including Givner—was another of her habits. She created so many myths (some might call them lies) about herself that her life seems as much a fiction as her fiction. She was forever embroidering some details of her life, deleting others, fabricating those which may have pleased her at a given time. She created myths about her family, her husbands, her lovers, and her education. If there are several explanations for any one event, Miss Givner tends to present them all, much to the confusion of the reader. Included are a series of items about Miss Porter's sexual history. She was frigid and barren; yet it is also suggested that she was a nymphomaniac with casual sexual habits. She became pregnant (even though infertile), later to miscarry. Yet her miscarriage occurs after she has had a hysterectomy, performed because she had contracted a case of gonorrhea from her first husband during the marriage. The details of Miss Porter's sexual habits and history are chronologically confusing at best. At worst, they are tasteless, the hallmark of the mindless and morbid probings of all too many recent literary biographies.

Joan Givner, a professor of English at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan, was Porter's handpicked biographer. Givner has researched her sub-

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ject assiduously, and she presents her findings in a dry, academic tone and long-winded style: As one could only wonder about Porter's choices of husbands and lovers, all of whom let her down and treated her poorly, one also wonders about her choice of biographer. She might have done better.

Compared to Porter's life, William Carlos Williams's, as delineated by Paul Mariani in *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked,* was far less eventful. While Williams knew at a young age that he would have preferred to devote his life to writing poetry, he chose the practical course and instead trained to become a physician. At the University of Pennsylvania, his fellow students were Ezra Pound, the poet H.D., and the painter Charles Demuth. For a while it looked as though Williams might have a promising professional career. After interning at the French Hospital in New York City, he began a prestigious pediatric internship at Child's Hospital. Williams's sense of morality, however, was pitted against the practices of the hospital bureaucracy when he was asked to sign his name to some falsified documents. Shortly thereafter he resigned on principle, returning to the place of his birth, Rutherford, New Jersey. There he practiced medicine and wrote poetry for most of the remainder of his life.

Most of Dr. Williams's career—both as a physician and as a poet—was a struggle. He was rarely more than financially solvent, preferring to overlook the bills of his indigent patients. From his patients, though, he took many of the images and idioms for his poetry. A champion of the American vernacular, Williams has been called "crude," "primitive," and "barbaric." In his poem "Danse Russe," from the collection *Al Que Quiere,* Williams portrayed himself dancing:

> naked, grotesquely
> before my mirror
> waving my shirt round my head
> and singing softly to myself
> 'I am lonely, lonely.
> I was born to be lonely,
> I am best so!'

During the same year, 1917, T. S. Eliot published "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock":

> No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was
> meant to be;
> Am an attendant lord, one that will do
> To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
> Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
> Deferential, glad to be of use,
> Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
> Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
> At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
> Almost, at times, the Fool.

It was Eliot who got the laurels and the critics' praise while Williams was treated shabbily or ignored altogether. Wallace Stevens called Williams "antipoetic"; other critics said his style was "an exercise in spiritual hygiene" and "a remarkable, but sterile sport." The English critic Austin Warren pronounced him "energetic, breezy, uncouth." The consensus seemed to be that Williams

might have been a good poet, but he was not much of a thinker.

Critical opinion, however, seems to change nearly as regularly as Paris fashion, and Williams is currently more in vogue than Eliot. Though Williams's work was neither uniformly good, uniformly bad, nor uniformly mediocre, his biographer and critic, Paul Mariani, seems unable to appreciate his poetry except through praising it. And at times Mariani offers neither praise nor even discussion of structure and symbolism. One of Williams's early poems was written in response to Pound, who had accused him of wasting his life:

> Any way you walk
> Any way you turn
> Any way you stand
> Any way you lie
> You have pissed your life
> From an effectual fool
> butting his head blindly
> against obstacles, become
> brilliant—focusing
> performing accurately to
> a given end—

By way of comment, Mariani says: "He [Williams] overheard some kids playing ball in the streets and singing the poem's refrain and he had married that taunting repetition to Pound's accusations."

The biographer is sometimes as insensitive as the poet has been accused of being, particularly in his effort to portray Williams as a likable fellow. Dr. Williams was an irascible, cranky, and sometimes coarse man. He referred to Eliot as that "s—— a—," Hart Crane as a "crude homo," and Laura Riding as a "prize bitch." He was fairly indiscriminate, though not indiscreet, in his several extramarital affairs. He avoided one near affair with a German baroness/dadaist sculptress only because she told him she had syphilis. When the baroness continued her pursuit, Williams bought a punching bag to practice on should he have to resort to physical blows with her. A few months later, the practice paid off when Williams flattened the baroness with a punch to the mouth. While Mariani seems to find this behavior quite acceptable, he faults Williams on another count: "he really did admire her ability to survive and to eat life whole. But he could not, *could not,* bring himself to go to bed with her." Like Joan Givner, Paul Mariani is a little too much in awe of his subject to give it the critical treatment it deserves. □

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Spare Change

Gail Albert: *Matters of Chance;* G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York.

Marguerite Yourcenar: *A Coin in Nine Hands;* Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

Lina Wertmüller: *The Head of Alvise;* William Morrow; New York.

***Extended Outlooks;* Edited by Jane Cooper, Gwen Head, Adelaide Morris, Marcia Southwick; Collier Books; New York.**

by Betsy Clarke

Fiction today at once promises more than it delivers and yet delivers a mumbo jumbo that is more than the reader seeks. Each of these four volumes suffers from that syndrome to some degree. The publishers seem anxious to attribute all manner of wisdom and grand philosophy to these books, which at best merely purvey some simple truths about the human condition. At worst, though, they nearly self-destruct under the strain of attempting to propound questionable profundities.

Gail Albert's first novel, in which the narrator is dying of cancer, is a typical case in point. The idea is promising enough. An impecunious woman from a Brooklyn Jewish ghetto marries well and juggles a tenured university position, a husband, and two adorable children from a co-op overlooking Central Park. Cancer strikes. Add to this some of life's ironies—her father's gambling that brought the family both hope and despair, her brother's death that saved her father's life—and the author is on her way to a successful portrayal of some of the larger universal forces with which we all joust: accident, fate, doom. Unfortunately, Ms. Albert is not content to pursue themes of even this magnitude. Instead, she dogs subplots and pointless detail which diffuse the power of her narrative. Perhaps terrified that, in the end, her work will not say anything, she throws in marital problems, pet rodents, undisciplined plants, scientific experiments, in-laws, and all manner of trivia which have not been given needed textual support. In addition, she has snubbed a major element of terminal-illness fiction, suspense, by giving her heroine 10 years to live.

Albert is also prone to occasional rash statements that sound like something out of Bill Moyers. "I've attained the American Dream and it's come near to killing me," the protagonist confesses early in the novel. And yet the point of the next 200-odd pages is to discover the nature of the entity that forced these terrible consequences upon her. Accident? Psychological conflict over abandoning her religious youth? Act of God? Perhaps she breathed asbestos as a child.

Judging from the author's picture and biographical information on the novel's dustcover, it is possible that this book is more autobiographical than a healthy work of fiction dares to be. Accuracy is a must, of course, but fiction thrives on imagination. The author is simply too fascinated by the heroine, her habits and feelings, to probe the larger issue of where one particular set of circumstances fits into the universal scheme of things. Clearly, Ms. Albert worked hard on the novel, and occasionally, midst the inevitable renditions of hair-combing and dog-walking, a few sentences of cogent analysis burst forth. *Matters of Chance* is, in fact, more a disappointing novel than a bad one. Perhaps with her next effort, the author will take a few paces back from her creation and, while pondering the role of chance, add to her work an element of risk.

A Coin in Nine Hands, Marguerite Yourcenar's novel of 1934 that is now revised and reissued, has many virtues, not the least of which is its excellent structure. Set in Rome during Mussolini's reign, the story moves its focus from one character to another with the passage of a 10-lira silver piece, sometimes randomly, sometimes in payment, sometimes to absolve an obligation. Intriguingly, though, this convention, rather than symbolizing the community of strangers, underlines a contrary observation, for the individuals connected by the coin are actually more closely related in other ways.

"[Yourcenar's] novel takes an emphatic, anti-Fascist political stance."
—*The New Republic*

As for Yourcenar's lyricism, "outstanding" describes it inadequately. The author is able to probe human emotion and thought with prose that is powerful, yet simple and brief. She observes her characters with a now-sardonic, now-sympathetic eye. Of an abandoned husband, she remarks, "he missed, not the wife he lost, but the mistress she had never been to him." And an elderly painter traveling in Rome near excavations is "unsympathetic to these labors which devastated a near past for the profit of a more distant one"; he "looked into space a few yards and a few centuries below ours." Unfortunately, injected into her marvelous recountings of human failings, hopes, and strengths is a political theme that she renders less effectively. Yourcenar claims in the Afterword that *A Coin in Nine Hands* is a novel that "confront[s] the hollow reality behind the bloated facade of Fascism," but this statement seems to be a mostly baseless boast. Yes, there is political oppression depicted, such as the deportation and death of the dissident Carlo Stevo. An assassination attempt against Mussolini is

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also dramatized. Fascism, however, is never confronted, or even examined, in any broad, aggressive manner. "Mentioned" would more accurately describe its treatment. Perhaps this aspect of the novel only seems timid because of today's literary climate in which almost every writer claims to be making a grand political exposé. The numerous contemporary authors who dwell on Hitler and Mussolini are becoming irksome: where are courageous novelists who are willing to confront the totalitarianism that threatens us today?

The Head of Alvise, the first novel of controversial film director Lina Wertmüller (of *Seven Beauties* and *The Seduction of Mimi* fame), is another sort of novel altogether. This account of the rogue Sammy Silverman's crusade against perfection in the person of Alvise, a Nobel Prize winner and accomplished surgeon, diplomat, poet, and husband, is vulgar, crude, tasteless, over-punctuated —and hilarious. The dust jacket, which makes the book sound like *Moby Dick* ("hate confronting love, evil confronting good, death confronting life") does the author a disservice. For *The Head of Alvise* is 100 hundred percent fun and fantasy, and farfetched fantasy at that. The novel's chief attribute is that it sees its first purpose as entertainment. Sadly, a reader must turn to a film director to bring to fiction what is now found only in other media: action, dialogue, suspense. Wertmüller's characters are vivid, her adjectives sharp, her similes pointed. In a tale based loosely on the Salome story, Jewish boys Sammy and Alvise escape from Treblinka, zoom across Europe, and are adopted by nice families in the United States. Sammy has Alvise's perfect judgment, good will, and cleverness to thank for his survival, but the homely and incompetent youth covers his trail and proceeds to forget about Alvise, whose many attributes only highlight Sammy's deficiencies of character and talent. Forty years later, after Sammy has established himself as the successful, wealthy author of trashy mystery thrillers (he writes one a month), he comes upon Alvise, who under a pseudonym has bested Sammy once more with his book *Man Could Be Beautiful.* The volume was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and sold a million copies. Deflated again by his old companion, Sammy sets out to find the flaws beneath his rival's perfect demeanor, and, for good measure, to steal his wife. Failing at those pursuits, he accepts Alvise's nature as genuine and proceeds to plot murder. "I know what kind of hate—pure hate—perfection inspires," he declares.

Throughout this wonderfully madcap adventure, Wertmüller makes us examine the makeup of human character, what we value in it, and why. And so, when she concludes her novel with the classic Hollywood ending—good triumphing over evil—a reader accepts the outcome with mixed emotions.

The editors of *Extended Outlooks* claim that this collection of mostly poetry is based on "RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE," by which they mean that it encompasses "academic women, Black and Third World women, lesbian women, politically committed women . . ." In other words, all of the contributors are liberal Democrats. Surprisingly, it is not as bad as a reader has every reason to fear. Take away the inevitable sex and revolution poetry, and there is still quite a bit left. Included in this volume are works by Maxine Kumin, Margaret Atwood, Maxine Hong Kingston, Marge Piercy, and Adrienne Rich, but, as is often the case with anthologies, both the very best and the very worst contributions are made by unknowns.

Certainly there is too much revisionism and ideology in the authors' treatments of Laura Riding, Ethel Rosenberg, and others. And a poet named Michelle Cliff cannot resist asserting that "They are killing black/children in Atlanta," which only proves that some poets either do not care about the facts or do not know them. *They?* In the biographical sketches supplied by each author, Grace Paley felt the need to describe herself as an "enemy of the government's war on poor countries, poor people, people of deep color, and all women" when a simple date of birth would have sufficed. Nevertheless, most of the contributors show every sign of being normal. Notable are the talents of Barbara Anderson, Becky Birtha, Constance Carrier, Jane Kenyon, Marlene Leamon, Lisel Mueller, and Joan Swift, but there are hundreds of entries, many of which are well done.

Still, one hopes that in the next such project, a real respect for difference will appear. After all, black, politically active academic and lesbian women are not the ones publishers are turning away these days. Their message blares through our culture, and no one is mistaking what it is. More interesting would be a volume in which the politics, race, and sexual orientation of the contributors were unknown and the artists' creations stood by themselves as works of art. □

In the Mail

Barbarians and Romans: The Birth Struggle of Europe, A.D. 400-700 **by Justine Davis Randers-Pehrson; University of Oklahoma Press; Norman, OK.** The Barbarians wanted to crush the Romans, right? Wrong, insists the author in a thorough and lively text—they were just clumsy.

Freedom, Society and the State: An Investigation into the Possibility of Society without Government **by David Osterfeld; University Press of America; Washington, DC.** Anarchy revisited.

Home from Exile: An Approach to Post-Existentialist Philosophizing **by Denis Hickey; University Press of America; Washington, DC.** A hefty text that concludes: "The man who is condemned to be free is also condemned to insatiability. Man the religious animal is forever condemned to be religious." The reader is condemned to over 450 pages.

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Mismanaging War & Morals

William H. McNeill: *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000;* University of Chicago Press; Chicago.

James F. Childress: *Moral Responsibility in Conflicts: Essays on Nonviolence, War, and Conscience;* Louisiana State University Press; Baton Rouge.

by Thomas Fleming

War, as much as peace, is among the arts and blessings of civilization. On this point Hobbes was mistaken. The state of nature may be a state of unremitting violence, but it is not a state of war, which is a purposive action, an exercise in restraint. As Hobbes's friend, Sir William Davenant, expressed it: "To conquer tumult, nature's sodain force,/war, art's deliberate strength, was first devis'd;/ cruel to those whose rage has no remorse,/least civil pow'r should be by throngs surpris'd." The right to make war has always been counted among the attributes of sovereignty. Among the more civilized peoples, this power over life and death is extended to include such private affairs as are elsewhere regulated by duels, feuds, and assassinations. Even libertarians generally concede the state's exclusive power to make war, although they typically refuse it the coercive power to conscript citizens.

The exact nature and extent of the state's war-making powers have been debated for centuries. Draft registration, arms reduction, nuclear disarmament, and similar topical issues are footnotes to the text of the more general discussion. Unfortunately, debate on the issues usually proceeds no further than an exchange of insults and misinformation, because neither hawks nor doves ever think about such abstruse subjects as the nature of sovereignty. In a pair of recent but quite different works, two aspects of the state's war-making powers are considered: its power over the wealth of its people and over the life and "conscience" of its citizens.

Dr. Fleming is editor of The Southerner.

William H. McNeill, in *The Pursuit of Power,* does not attempt to elucidate either of these two principles of statecraft, but he does discuss, with considerable insight and erudition, the relation between political economy and military technology. His subtitle, "Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000," indicates the scope of the work. Any such synthesis necessarily relies on secondary sources and is inevitably filled with mistakes in scholarship and judgment. McNeill's is no exception. The work is nonetheless valuable, if only for its interpretation of the role of free markets in the advancement of military arts.

Rulers, so McNeill argues, inevitably desire stability and, therefore, control over arms production and distribution. Even before the development of such economic ideologies as mercantilism and socialism, governments made fitful efforts to control the means of production, usually with unlucky results. Of course the idea of a controlled or "command" economy cannot develop without the contrasting—and logically prior—idea of the free market. Neither idea seems to have occurred—despite McNeill's claims to the contrary—to the ancients. McNeill's own model—the Chinese from 1000 to 1400—seems to prove the point: it was the flourishing of free-market production and trade which led the authorities to impose constraints.

If McNeill's assessment is correct, then China underwent a great leap forward in the technology and production of strategic materials and weapons, largely as a result of free competition among iron smelters, arms makers, and merchants. Their efforts "set humankind off on a thousand year exploration of what could be accomplished by relying on prices and personal or small group . . . perception of private advantage as a way of orchestrating behavior on a mass scale." Iron production rose sharply and before 1300 the Chinese excelled in the manufacture of crossbows and guns. In the early 15th century Ming Emperors could boast a fleet of 3,800 ships, the largest of which was five times the size of Vasco da Gama's flagship. Everything Chinese was on a greater scale than that of the later Portuguese, who duplicated the Chinese exploits in the Indian Ocean. And yet, by the time the Europeans arrived on the scene, the Chinese overseas trade was stagnant, iron production a fraction of former years, and the government unable to defend its interests against the foreigners. Why—or more precisely *how*—did it come about? McNeill believes it was the Chinese hostility to trade which caused the decline. Confucianist bureaucrats did their best to stifle "immoral profits." Successful businesses were faced with confiscatory taxation or with the risk of absorption into a state monopoly. Eventually, laws were passed to forbid international trade and the navy was abandoned.

The Chinese achievements were equaled and then surpassed by the city-states of Italy and later by the nation-states of Europe. Invariably, free markets led to technical advances which led to higher profits and greater power. It took some time for rulers to realize the advantages of laissez-faire: e.g., Phillip II of Spain, who, despite the constant supply of precious metals from the New World, found it increasingly necessary to go into debt to support his adventures in the Netherlands. The results of his financial tinkerings were catastrophic. High taxes caused an exodus of merchants and producers from the Spanish Netherlands into Holland, and the King's failure to pay his bills on time—including four actual repudiations of debt—meant that in the future he had to borrow at much higher interest rates. By 1600 40 per-

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cent of his income was spent on servicing old debts. The Spanish national debt led directly to a reduction in the numerical strength of the Spanish army: from 300,000 in the 1630's to 50,000 by 1700.

During this same period efforts to control the manufacture of arms in places like Liège commonly caused disruptions in operations. The only way the King of Spain could ensure an adequate supply of arms was to leave the manufacturers alone and pay their price. By the end of the 17th century the rulers of England, France, and Germany had "ceased to struggle against the constraints of the market." They came to realize that confiscatory taxation was counterproductive, that equitable taxes actually increased the national wealth *and* the state's revenues. The technical innovations of the European powers caused an astonishing economic growth and allowed them to expand their power across the face of the earth. The exception is, of course, Russia, where timid bureaucrats could not afford to take risks. So long as European military techniques remained fairly stable—as in the period between 1736 and 1853—Russia, with her enormous resources, could afford to be stodgy. But in a period of innovation —after 1853—the Russians fell far behind. Is this a lesson for our SALT negotiators?

In the past 100 years Europe and the U.S. have been turning away from the free market. Up to a point, the resurgence of command economics may have been necessary. The high prices and great capital risks of new weapon systems make a close cooperation between business and government inevitable, but the social cost has been great. Britain in World War I first worked out the welfare/warfare linkage which dominates all the major powers today. It was realized, by the likes of Lloyd-George, that "an all-out arms race could be conducted only by a government prepared to intervene drastically in prevailing socioeconomic relationships." This meant not only progressive taxation but a steady increase in the role of government in everyday life. The pace of these developments accelerated during World War II. After the war, command technology methods were applied to reconstruction: "Managed economies became normal... freedom collapsed into obedience and conformity to bureaucratically channeled behavior." The frightening part is the role played by patriotic conservatives, whose consciences were quieted by the reflection that all the changes were only "temporary measures." McNeill's evidence can be taken as an illustration of Gabriel Marcel's contention that "the excessive and unhealthy development brought about in the military machine, on its administrative side, by the late war, will prove to have exercised an almost entirely evil effect on human relationships and to have played a considerable part in bringing into being those new conditions of life of which almost all of us complain."

Whatever the "right" of the matter, the state's wholesale intervention in the economy is seldom productive. And yet hardly anyone—certainly not antiwar "liberals"—is proposing to reduce the role of the state. But these same liberal pacifists are very eager to restrict the state's generally unchallenged right to call upon all able-bodied men to defend their country. James F. Childress, a professor of "religious studies and medical education," discusses the issues of "nonviolence, war, and conscience" in a set of essays, *Moral Responsibility in Conflicts*.

Childress argues that nonviolence has moral priority over violence because it is man's nature to trust, like Blanche Dubois, to the kindness of strangers. Nonviolent resistance to "evil" is an appeal to conscience, an attempt to "evoke trust." In the case of war, there is a presumption that violent solutions are wrong because of our "prima facie duty not to kill or injure others." Therefore, war must be justified by the state which compels its citizens to participate. The criteria for a "just war" include the legitimate authority of the state, a reasonable chance of success, a proportionality between risks and rewards, and right intention. In handling draft resistance based on appeals to conscience, "the state has to show that a compelling interest cannot be met in alternative ways to avoid injury to conscience." Since Childress's case for conscience rests on trust, more particularly trust in strangers, it is fair to ask how much men really do trust each other. Even in our own deracinated society, we do not typically trust strangers if we can avoid it. We limit our confidence as much as possible to members of family, community, or interest groups to which we belong. Childress borrows the example of a mother entrusting her child to a baby-sitter. But no sensible mother employs a total stranger; she relies on a network of friends and relations for recommendations. It is true that trust binds people together into community, but it also pits them against outsiders.

The moral priority of nonviolence needs to be established on a firmer foundation than trust. Childress never considers—even for the sake of argument—the case that has been made for violence

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by Nietzsche, Sorel, and even terrorists. He seems to assume that the Christian ethic is both nonviolent and an accepted model for all mankind. However, the scriptures of the New Testament are—at best—inconclusive. All that John the Baptist required of soldiers was that they refrain from extortion. Some early Christians did find the Gospel incompatible with a military profession, but there is no sign that Cornelius the centurion left the service. One thing is clear: Scripture is uniformly against civil disobedience. Wives, children, slaves, and subjects are all told to obey those that have authority over them. Even if Christianity did justify civil disobedience, most of mankind are not Christian. In fact, Childress does not himself write as a believer. His arguments rely little on scriptural quotation and betray only the slightest familiarity with Augustine, Thomas, Luther—indeed, with any of the doctors of the church, reformed or unreformed.

Of the "just war" criteria cited by Childress, the only one not subject to question is the legitimate authority of the state. The validity of the others must be proved and the burden of proof in all such cases is not (as Childress seems to suppose) on those who would uphold the order of the state, but on those who would deny it. The state, as an instrument of social unity, exists primarily for the purpose of defense. To challenge that right is not merely a threat to the state's existence: it is a threat to all civil order. The problem with books like Childress's—and of far better books like Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* or Locke's *Treatises*—is that they start with an absurd assumption: that mankind is made up of individuals who, from time to time, have freely banded together into societies. The truth is that such free and isolated individuals only come into existence in the latest and most decadent stages of a civilization. The farther we look back into history and into simpler phases of social organization, the less visible is the individual. A community —a state—is not made up of individuals but of families, communities, tribes, and corporate groups. A refusal to defend the state is, as Socrates realized, even more serious than an attack upon parents.

It is interesting that Childress, following Hannah Arendt, cites Socrates—in company with Ring Lardner, Jr.—as a case of appeal to conscience. Consider these two men: the one, a Hollywood scriptwriter who joined a political movement aimed at the destruction of his own society and who refused to testify against his Stalinist friends on the grounds of conscience; the other, a philosopher who refused to escape from an unjust sentence of death on the grounds that he owed everything to his state. On this subject of conscientious objection, we might take Socrates' admonition in the *Crito* as our guide:

> If you cannot persuade your country, you must do whatever it orders, and patiently submit to any punishment that it imposes . . . and if it leads you out to war, to be wounded or killed, you must comply, and it is right that you should do so.

For Socrates, as for most loyal Americans today, there were only two choices: obedience or exile. All his life he had been guided by the inner voice of conscience, but it never told him to betray friends and family to the ravages of a merciless enemy. He knew—as Judas Iscariot must have known—that all treason is a form of suicide. □

Watching the Pillars Crumble

Susan Cheever: *The Cage;* Houghton Mifflin; Boston.

Anne Rice: *Cry to Heaven;* Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

by Dennis Q. McInerny

If the long-heralded death of the novel ever takes place, the event will be brought about, as was the fall of Rome, by the slow, sure, insidious processes of internal decay. Activities in American fiction today are not conducive to optimism about the vital signs. To be sure, we do have some first-rate novelists at work, turning out books worthy of serious response, but the major portion of the novels published each year in the U.S. leaves much to be desired. It is not simply a matter of their lacking distinction, of their being close to the mark but not quite on it; rather, what one is regularly confronted with are novels, or would-be novels, whose quality is deplorably bad. They simply do not measure up as literature.

They are bad by reason of their subject matter, which is characterized by intellectual and emotional vacuity, always tedious, but at times well-nigh oppressive. Pessimism hangs over contemporary American fiction like a Los Angeles smog: varying in intensity, but always there. If it were only a matter of pessimism things would not be so degenerate. Underneath the pall of pessimism, however, lies an unreal city of almost utter hopelessness. Many American writers have lost heart, with the result that the act of writing becomes an exercise in futility. The best that some of these writers can do, by way of feigning a vitality they no longer possess, is to attempt to outdo one another in sordid and grotesque exhibitionism. As despair is a bona fide human condition, novelists who write from and about it would be worth listening to—were they capable of writing about it interestingly, with some display of craftsmanship. The sad fact is that most of them are unable to articulate their dark vision in anything approaching a commanding fashion. Thus, what exists is a plethora of works that

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are effectively nonnovels because of the utter poverty of their contents and because of the shabbiness of their style.

Who is responsible for this melancholy state of affairs? The writers themselves are, of course. But the publishers too must assume a large share of the blame. The health of the American publishing industry is not good, and the prognosis, barring some radical change for the better, is not promising. The problem of the publishers is one of taste. They tend to lack it. Although, as James Laughlin has pointed out, one can still find tasteful, discriminating people in positions of power within the major publishing houses (he singles out Robert Giroux for special praise), most of those who call the shots show no special regard for quality fiction; quite the contrary. It is not that they are people without principles. They have principles, but ones wherein aesthetic considerations are minimized. Such publishers have idolatrously given themselves over to the great god Marketability. An illustrative case in point: an editor at one of the more formidable New York houses recently returned a manuscript for a novel to a writer acknowledging that the work was substantive and well written. However, the editor chided him—in tones that implied the commission of an unpardonable sin—for a lack of sensitivity to "market considerations."

Robie McCauley, onetime editor of *The Kenyon Review* and now a senior editor at Houghton Mifflin, contends that the future for good fiction in this country looks very gloomy. The major publishers simply do not want to take the inevitable risks associated with fiction that refuses to appeal to a culture's lowest common denominator, and he notes that, whereas at the turn of the century American publishing houses were putting out some 200 first novels per year, the number is now half that. He admits that in his own company, Houghton Mifflin, it is, in more cases than not, the marketing department that has the final say on whether or not a fiction manuscript will be published. The guiding question has nothing to do with quality—just salability. The days of editors of the stature of Maxwell Perkins appear to be gone—one hopes, not forever. McCauley believes that if quality fiction is going to survive in this country it will not be because of the major publishers, but in spite of them. He looks to the "little presses" to save the day.

In light of these realities, novels like Susan Cheever's *The Cage* and Anne Rice's *Cry to Heaven* aren't surprising. They are not very good, although of the two, *The Cage* is at least somewhat more serious. One has the impression that Cheever has some idea of what is involved in writing for keeps. Her intentions are good, but it takes more than that to make literature. Her style has a peculiar kind of nervous self-consciousness that I associate with "creative writing" as defined by academe: the Writers' Workshop Syndrome. There is a paradox to be confronted here. Her style would seem to be the product of no small amount of studied carefulness, but the beneficial effects of that carefulness are questionable, at best. There is a staged quality to her writing, as if she were trying to create *Beauty* ex nihilo. Specifically, she uses too many adjectives, and her word choice misses *le mot juste* with irritating frequency. Her images are often awkward, on occasion amusingly so, and tend to call undue attention to themselves. In the end, one concludes that Cheever lacks that intimate, insider's knowledge of language that one expects of the professional writer.

If the subject matter of *The Cage* had some depth we might be prepared to excuse Cheever her stylistic infelicities, but the novel's story line is hackneyed. We confront a reasonably well-educated, appropriately sophisticated middle-aged couple who discover, after many years of marriage, that they are not fulfilled. In this case the dogged exertions of the workaholic husband seem to be getting him no closer to his vaporous and elusive notion of success. The pampered fancy of the wife leads her to the conviction that she is a near martyr of neglect and that her husband is ripe to rush off with a younger woman at the slightest crook of a seductive finger. The couple does not convince, but the wife's melodramatic reaction to her largely imagined problem is not without verve. She locks up hubby in an elephant cage on the grounds of their summer home, and later, when he escapes and is trotting off to a freedom that his wife's bizarre behavior forced him to choose, she, mistaking him for a deer who has been messing up her garden, fires a rifle at him and, presumably, shoots him dead. End of book. *The Cage,* I realize, is attempting to deal with the profound and problematic intricacies that characterize human relationships, and in such a way so as to move us to think seriously about such matters. But the fundamental silliness of the protagonists prevents us from doing so. Such characters qualify for neither tragedy nor comedy, and even their pathos is boring and inconsequential.

"'Cry to Heaven' is so daring and imaginative . . . Mrs. Rice seems like nothing less than a magician: It is a pure and uncanny talent."

—*New York Times Book Review*

Anne Rice's *Cry to Heaven* is a historical novel written by someone whose knowledge of history—as is evident in the novel—is superficial and fragmented. The book is replete with topical special effects and gaudy displays of local color, but it is almost completely devoid of the inner sense of the era with which it is concerned. Rice writes—unconvincingly—about the world of the castrated male sopranos of 18th-century Italy. The novel's plot structure is so mechanical that events can be unerringly predicted. The characters are cut from cardboard; not a single one of them in this 531-page tome bears any similarity to genuine human persons living or dead,

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castrated or whole. The language is gushy and overdone or just bland journalese. Rice's unrestrained reliance upon hyperbole has the effect, ultimately, of causing the reader simply to withdraw his belief. The novel fairly floats on sensationalism, but sensationalism functioning as a distracting ploy. It doesn't work. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty back together again, and all the chic pornography and all the gratuitous violence, underwriting a realism which is totally ersatz, cannot make *Cry to Heaven* other than what it is—a prolonged exercise in syrupy sentimentality. □

The Prognosticator's Shuffle

John Naisbitt: *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives;* Warner Books; New York.

by Herbert I. London

Megatrends may be the current trendy book, not because its views are so startling or revelatory, but because its tone and outlook are so different from books that are generally published about the future. What John Naisbitt has written—perhaps unwittingly—is an antidote to the neo-Malthusians who have been claiming for more than a decade that apocalypse is around the corner waiting to embrace us with "fate of the earth" doom. Naisbitt doesn't mention the Club of Rome's *Limits To Growth* nor does he cite the Carter Administration's *Global 2000 Report.* He doesn't recite the litany of gloom the Paul Ehrlichs and Garrett Hardins promote. Instead he offers a description of this nation and the rest of the world in dynamic transition. This is a time between times, a great transition in which we presumably convert our economic engines from industrialization and services to information. As Naisbitt puts it: "Although the time between eras is uncertain, it is a great and yeasty time, filled with opportunity."

This is not a sophisticated book. It is filled with dubious suppositions, e.g., "societies are like human beings," and "a personal value system compensates for the impersonal nature of technology." Its methodology, which is based on the content analysis of newspapers, has the pretense of objectivity without the critical awareness of what newspapers are obliged to include and what is "newsworthy" in this era. Moreover, what Mr. Naisbitt describes as characteristics of a trend—such things as "the granola ethic" and human-potential groups—are in all probability as culturally durable as hula-hoops and love potions. Mr. Naisbitt does portray a dynamic society shifting its economic emphasis in an electronic revolution. Although Naisbitt doesn't specifically mention resources, it is apparent that the building blocks of a future economy are not based on minerals in the ground, but on knowledge, technology, capital, and ingenuity. If there is high unemployment in Michigan it is due as much to the transition from an industrial to an informational society as it is to the much-ballyhooed recession of the Reagan Administration. As Naisbitt points out, our economy faces structural unemployment in moribund sectors that cannot effectively cope with foreign competition—the steel industry, for example.

Implicitly, Naisbitt argues that we cope with immediate economic problems by diversifying, moving, and recognizing the well-developed trends. Clearly this is happening. However, what he doesn't recognize is the plight of those left behind—the 50-year-old automobile welder who earned $15 an hour and is now fortunate if he can secure a $6-an-hour night watchman's job. There are many who will not adjust to the new computer age for various reasons, such as their previous employment, their inability to adapt to new economic conditions, or their lack of education. Although it will be no consolation to the unemployed, the same condition existed when we converted from an ostensibly agricultural to an industrial economy.

It is interesting—as Naisbitt suggests—that the so-called Third World is a beneficiary of this transition. As we become more reliant on high technology, less-developed nations can fill the gap left by our departure from industrialization. The effects of the global redistribution of production can be observed today. Brazil has become a major shipbuilding nation; South Korea is coming to dominate steel markets; textiles are produced in India, Malaysia, and Taiwan; and, as the Japanese readily admit, automobile manufacturing will probably reside exclusively in the less-developed world before the end of this century. It is somewhat sophomoric, but the metaphor of the frog pond with tadpoles, toads, and frogs each going through a stage in its evolution is an appropriate model for our present world economic transition.

Naisbitt describes 10 trends that are transforming our lives. These are: 1. the transition from an industrial to an informational society; 2. the need for personal responses to balance impersonal high technology; 3. the evolution from national economies to a world economy; 4. the replacement of short-term for long-term planning and decision-making; 5. the growth of decentralized over centralized institutions; 6. a move away from institutional to individual help; 7. a de-

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emphasis on representative government and a corresponding desire for participatory democracy; 8. a change from organizational hierarchies to networking; 9. a geographic exodus from the North and Midwest to the West and Southwest; 10. a proliferation of cultural choices from few to many. These trends are mentioned as morsels to be devoured without careful scrutiny. They are claimed to be healthful, though they actually require a second look. For example, Naisbitt states that the decentralization trend is not merely existent, but is "the great facilitator of social change." Yet if people rely on local decisions to establish an energy policy, as he seems to maintain, it is possible that the diverse local reactions can imperil the high-tech society that Naisbitt predicts is on our horizon. Similarly, if one simply accepts the vision of many cultural options—a Balkanization of culture—what is to prevent a Schumpeterian scenario in which culture undermines the vitality of the economy? How is the informational society that depends on a well-educated populace going to flourish when mathematical and scientific illiteracy is pandemic? How does a society develop a long-term decision-making mode in an atmosphere of participatory democracy? Are referendum and initiative the best means to enact a foreign policy? Is the one-issue party the wave of the future or the ebb of the past? If, as an example of decentralization and personal choice, Naisbitt offers cable TV stations as a response to network domination, then why are stations like C.B.S. Cable facing such financial problems? If economic connections reduce the fear of war—an old bromide—then how does Mr. Naisbitt explain the response of the Eastern-bloc nations to the United States after years of generous (overly generous?) trade arrangements? Has our bail-out of Poland decreased that government's hostility to the United States? The unanswered questions and contradictions abound. Clichés become substitutes for observations to the extent that it seems that Naisbitt's exercise in moral relativism is a device for avoiding hard decisions based on values and social order.

> "How seriously should we take all this? Not very, I would say."
>
> —**Andrew Hacker**
> ***Fortune***

However, Naisbitt is on to something. We are certainly changing in some very notable ways, adjusting in the face of formidable problems that now—and will continue to—exist. The key point made, which Naisbitt admittedly borrows from Daniel Bell, is that a linear extrapolation of present conditions just cannot provide a description of the future. Attitudes do change, and the indomitable human spirit makes simple predictions illusory. However, for at least a generation observers have claimed that economic disaster is imminent; the world will face overpopulation and diminished food supply; pollution problems are intractable, and, as Kafka so ominously put it, "there is always hope, but not for us."

It is no wonder that the young danced the necrophilic bop to Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction" in the 1960's and AC/DC's "Highway to Hell" in the 1980's. It is no coincidence that a generation fed the pabulum of despair and mushroom clouds is now pessimistic about the future. It is hardly surprising that prophets of gloom attract overflow crowds at universities with the message that the sky is falling. In the world of foundations and universities, the gloom business is thriving. It is therefore with some modest rejoicing that Naisbitt's book should be welcomed. It isn't the primer for the 80's, one describing where our sophisticated technology is taking us—book-jacket notes notwithstanding. Surely all these trends won't evolve the way Naisbitt indicates. Certainly some of the trends will create more problems than they solve. But he is infinitely more realistic about the future than the doomsayers. He does salute the extremely powerful sway of the marketplace. He is sensitive to the demand for new products. And he does recognize the scope of American ingenuity.

This is indeed a transitional period. One doesn't have to be Pollyannish to be hopeful about the future. There are, as Naisbitt amply illustrates, good reasons for optimism. It is time someone pointed out that futurists from Nostradamus to Jean Dixon have gazed into their crystal balls to discover that the world is coming to an end. Yet it survives. In the course of human history there will always be catastrophes. They are unavoidable. However, mankind is not composed of lemmings that throw themselves into the abyss to oblivion. Humans seek answers, adjust to new conditions, and explore unique solutions as they also create new problems. Naisbitt may not really tell us where we are going, but he does remind us the trip may not be all that bad. □

In the Mail

***Mere Morality: What God Expects from Ordinary People* by Lewis B. Smedes; Wm. B. Eerdmans; Grand Rapids; MI.** The author, who notes that he is from southern California, says that "The commandments in the Bible . . . do not offer a detailed and up-to-date road map." Many of those who live in southern California and deal with the modern roadways wish that they could go back to simple, enduring maps.

***Humanities in Review*, Volume I edited by David Rieff; Cambridge University Press; New York.** Michel Foucault, Harold Bloom, Richard Sennett, and similar contributors belie the generality of the title.

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COMMENDABLES

Against a Child's Garden Perverse

Rita Kramer: ***In Defense of the Family;*** Basic Books; New York.

by Carlisle Packard

A first reaction to the title of Rita Kramer's book might be to wonder why it was necessary that such a book be written. Such a question, however, is rapidly answered by considering the denigration of the role of homemaker promoted by the media and popular culture. This treatment has made necessary the writing of such a book as *In Defense of the Family.* Rita Kramer, the author of several other books about children and families, defends the family by following a child from prebirth through adolescence and showing what it is that he needs for optimum development.

A number of important truths are revealed by Mrs. Kramer. One is this: if a youngster is to learn all that he can learn and be all that it is possible for him to be, it is best for him to have a full-time mother, at least during his first three years. Why is this so? Simply because individual infants need much love and care. No substitute gives love and care so well as a child's mother. Unfortunately, many mothers must work. It is more unfortunate that many mothers who need not work do so; they are often the ones who declaim most vigorously about their equal rights, including their right to fulfillment, always with the word "self" defiantly affixed. It is also unfortunate that this definition of equality must mean being the same instead of being equally important but with a different role. It is this very definition of equality, with its mischievous vagueness, that contributed to the death of the ERA.

Mr. Packard is a recent graduate of Brigham Young University.

As the child presumably has a father, the question of why he can't be the one to care full-time for the child arises. "It's an interesting possibility," writes Mrs. Kramer, "but there lurks the suspicion that mothering, even if culturally reinforced, can't be entirely without a biological basis. Social scientists tend to talk as though 'cultural' meant 'arbitrary,' when in fact culture, like the heart, has its reasons." Another truth discussed by Mrs. Kramer is that children grow best in families with two married parents, each of a different sex, who authoritatively but gently set limits to a child's behavior. One of a child's first ideas about himself, or what makes him different from others, is his gender identity. If he can be aware that he is a male like his dad or she a female like her mom, a child will have its first ideas of what it is to be a distinct self and feel that security which leads to proper functioning later in life. When parents command respect by lovingly prescribing boundaries, a child will be willing to forego natural, pleasurable behavior—striking someone in anger, for example—in exchange for pleasing his parents. This is the process by which a child learns self-control and adopts his parents' values as his own. Benign, permissive parents cannot so successfully accomplish this result because the child respects them less if he can get away with more.

A third truth presented by Mrs. Kramer is that parents should drastically limit television viewing and substitute the literary classics which help to develop the imagination. Mrs. Kramer states that it is not TV's content but its manner that ruins a child. It gives him habits of passivity instead of rousing his imagination, which is formed by playing and reading. Even language skills acquired from the "educational" programs are of little advantage and are not retained unless reinforced by practice. Additionally, literature provides moral education for young people. Those works that have stood the test of time have done so because they treat the enduring questions which children begin asking when they are very young and continue to ask, in different ways, when they are no longer young. One of those most enduring questions is: "How should one act?" It is explored in literature as diverse as the works of Homer, Shakespeare, and Twain and there with more depth and skill than *Three's Company* and *The Phil Donahue Show.*

By citing a study which states that "teenagers today are not more liberal in their attitudes with respect to sex than they were in the 1960s," I think that Mrs. Kramer has discounted the extent of the sexual revolution. Statistics show that illegitimacy was up 50 percent from 1970 to 1979: nearly one out of six children in the United States is born out of wedlock. Just about a third of the children born to white teenagers are illegitimate, as are 83 percent of those born to black teenagers. Nevertheless, even with her optimistic view of teenage sexuality, Mrs. Kramer's reaction to it is reassuringly stern, particularly with regard to sex education in the schools. It seems obvious that adolescents need their teenage years to study and grow; official encouragement of sexual activity certainly distracts young people from those important tasks. This part of Mrs. Kramer's book is particularly strong.

It is no wonder that those who seek to reshape society radically try to do so by shaping its children. This is true both of those in our country who would promote sexual liberation and of communist education programs in in totalitarian countries. *In Defense of the Family* emphasizes the idea that to shape the lives of children in positive, healthy ways is one of the most important functions of society. It gives the impression that the raising of a family is a profoundly conservative act in which the values of one generation are passed to the next: when a child loves his parents he will want to make their values his own. In this way *In Defense of the Family* could also be called "In Defense of Tradition" because the family is where those virtues derived from our Judeo-Christian tradition, and so necessary for liberty and stability, are inculcated; if those values are not absorbed there, they are often not learned at all. Rita Kramer goes a long way toward combating much of the shallow thought derived from feminism and disintegrated liberalism. □

Of Raphael and Relativity

Stanley L. Jaki: ***Angels, Apes, and Men;*** Sherwood Sugden; La Salle, IL.

As technical devices employed in modern science—cyclotrons, radar telescopes, lasers—grow ever more complex, popular reverence for their powers grows. Insufficiently appreciated for its

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essential role in permitting and fostering scientific progress is the ancient Judeo-Christian conception of man's dual nature, determined both by his physical body and by his unique mind. Holding doctorates in physics and theology, Stanley Jaki compellingly argues in *Angels, Apes, and Men* that the edifice of modern science could be built only upon such a foundation. With lucid rigor, he demonstrates that competing views of man, such as the pure idealism of "fallen angels" like Kant and Hegel or the simple materialism of "glorified apes" like Rousseau and Darwin, are not only unscientific but clearly antiscientific. Only a transcendent mind can "conquer" the universe with abstract mathematical formulae, but only corporeal matter can touch the queer-shaped universe to verify such equations. And what such theorizing and experimentation leads to eventually is not the metaphysical vacuum of modern thought, but rather back to the metaphysical absolutes of Western tradition. (Surprisingly, Jaki reveals, Einstein actually came to regret that his paradigm was known as the theory of relativity and not the theory of invariance.) Though the Psalmist probably did not realize it, a position "a little lower than the angels" is ideal for doing science. (BC) □

IN FOCUS

Footnoting Falwell

James Davison Hunter: *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity;* Rutgers University Press; New Brunswick, NJ.

It is an anomaly only to be explained by cultural bias that while academicians have assiduously documented, analyzed, and studied the liberal "mainline" Protestant churches which have experienced a dramatic statistical decline in the past decade, they have all but ignored the more conservative Evangelical Protestant churches which have simultaneously experienced a remarkable resurgence. As James Hunter observes, "theologically conservative Protestantism in America is . . . usually dismissed as an anachronism, as a marginal remnant of an outdated form of religious consciousness and lifestyle." Consequently, there is a "regrettable lack of social-scientific literature" about it; *American Evangelicalism* is Professor Hunter's helpful attempt to fill the gap.

By interpreting contemporary demographic and opinion-survey data within a context of historical and sociological analysis, Dr. Hunter locates American Evangelicalism "in the mainstream (not the sectarian margin) of the nineteenth century American Protestant experience" and shows that it is neither so simple nor so intellectually negligible as popular stereotypes make it appear. Indeed, in analyzing the Evangelical accommodation to and protest against the modern world, Dr. Hunter shows that it is actually more complex than the position of the much-lauded liberal theologians, whose work evinces simply "a decided capitulation to the cognitive constraints of modernity" in its radical "devaluation of the spiritual." While it has made "certain concessions at the level of social demeanor and social discourse," Dr. Hunter finds that Evangelicalism has resisted compromise "at the doctrinal level," thus retaining a core of Christian belief which provides "a higher degree of consolation" than does the naturalized "social gospel" adopted as a substitute by skeptical liberals. Still, though he leaves open the possibility that Evangelicals may yet have a cosmic last laugh, Dr. Hunter is rather pessimistic about their prospects for victory in the terrestrial battle against the more wealthy, better educated, better positioned, and more "modern" amoral secularists who mock their faith. To non-Evangelical religionists who are understandably embarrassed by the simplism and pharisaism evident in some Evangelists' public actions and statements (including the much-publicized declaration that God does not hear Jewish prayers), perhaps this prognosis may not seem especially threatening. However, in the apparent absence of a more sophisticated and potent phalanx of believers, everyone hoping for the survival of some vestige of decency and reverence in American public life would do well to pray that they can at least hold the field until such a force can be marshaled. (BC) □

Aged Wine and Rebottled Ripple

***The Otis Ferguson Reader;* Edited by Dorothy Chamberlain and Robert Wilson;** December Press; Highland Park, IL.

Stanley Kauffmann: *Before My Eyes: Film Criticism and Comment;* Da Capo Press; New York.

The two names most associated with *The New Republic* in the 30's and 40's are, undoubtedly, Edmund Wilson and Malcolm Cowley. These days, Wilson is always the proper "Edmund," never the diminutive "Bunny." He has all but been turned into a granite monument; those criticizing Wilson tend to be like Gore Vidal, who concentrated more on Wilson's real or imagined homosexual tendencies than on his critical observations. Cowley—as of this writing—is still vital—in a sense. He has lost the spark of the exiles he once chronicled and has become an institution that produces reminiscences and forewords to books. One of his forewords is to a collection of essays written by Otis Ferguson, a man to whom Cowley gave a start at *The New Republic* in 1933. In his day, Ferguson was well known—and with good reason. His writings on various subjects—jazz, in particular—show an erudite, unpretentious mind that has the rare ability to express itself in an idiosyncratic prose style that is often engaging and never cloying. Wilson's and Cowley's books can be readily found (with few exceptions),

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even in mass-market bookstores (e.g., B. Dalton, Waldenbooks). The Ferguson collection at hand, however, is available *only* from the publisher (December Press, 3093 Dato, Highland Park, IL 60035). It's just another sad bit of evidence that literary esteem is often manufactured, not always earned.

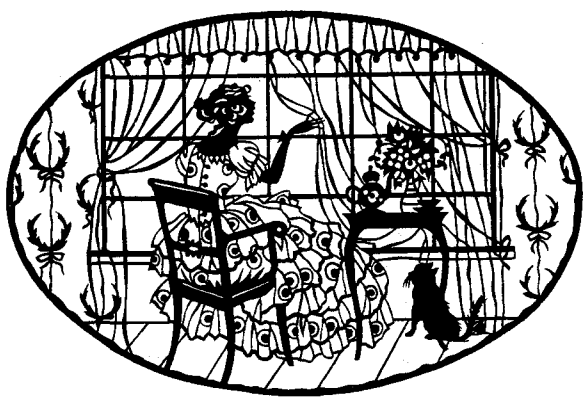
Otis Ferguson died in 1943. Stanley Kauffmann became the film critic of *The New Republic* in 1958. The legacy was not passed. This is not to say that Kauffmann isn't an interesting writer, because he is. Often, his instincts are good and their manifestation sharp (q.v. his pieces on the pneumatic Robert Altman). In a milieu populated by the likes of Pauline Kael and Andrew Sarris, Kauffmann looks good. Bring in Ferguson, Cowley, or Wilson—well, the conclusion is clear. And about the production of literary and critical prowess: the Kauffmann collection was originally published by Harper & Row in 1980; Da Capo's reprint arrived late last year. Yet one has to send a sawbuck to an address in Illinois to get the Ferguson work. (SM) □

Snapshots from the Seashore

Elizabeth Bishop: *The Complete Poems 1927-1979;* Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

The late Elizabeth Bishop is considered by her admirers to be one of the best American poets of the 20th century. Unlike the claims made by "fans," this consideration is a studied one and perhaps has some merit. Perhaps. Bishop was born in 1911 in Worcester, Massachusetts. The geography is important: sea and coastlines. Nature—that indomitable subject of the poet—was not kind to Bishop. In the year of her birth her father died. 1916 saw her mother committed to an insane asylum in Nova Scotia. Problems with immigration laws prevented Gertrude Bishop's return to the U.S. Elizabeth, at age five, saw her mother for the last time. The poet of the 19th century tended to be sickly: Keats. The woman poet of the 19th century tended to be confined: Dickinson. Elizabeth Bishop was a sickly child; the lungs were the problem: bronchitis, asthma. She was bedridden; the embryonic poet turned to books. When she matured she set out on her journeys, perhaps in reaction to her previous confinement. Traveling abroad meant the sea. The sea offered release, but it could also be cruel: in "Wading at Wellfleet" she likens it to a chariot of old with "sharp blades around its wheels." While on a trip to Brazil in 1951, the allergies from the days of childhood reasserted themselves and she was laid up in the South American country. She was to spend some 17 years in Brazil. The poet returned to her source. In 1979, the year of her death, Bishop was back on familiar ground after years of peregrination: she was teaching at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In a work that was motivated by admiration, *Elizabeth Bishop* (Twayne Publishing Co.; New York; 1966), Anne Stevenson makes a point about Bishop that to a nonadmirer of the poet sums up the dubious achievement of 52 years of poetry: "She has accepted what she has seen, and she has faithfully observed a great deal. But she has never developed her observations into a philosophy, never explicitly associated them with a central core of thought or belief." For those who believe in autotelic art, who think that the literary symbol *simply is,* Bishop's recordings are their own justification. But for those who seek more in poetry, there is something lacking: it is hard to discern any underlying values in the poetry; indeed, one suspects that any sense of value that can be found is simply a construct of the reader, not an offering from the poet. In a sense, many of Bishop's poems are simply postcards: nicely captured scenes of various locales: "Oh, but it is dirty!/—this little filling station" or "The sun is blazing and the sky is blue./Umbrellas clothe the beach in every hue" or "Summer is over upon the sea." Other poems are clearly bookish, as their titles make clear: "Twelfth Morning; or What You Will," "From Trollope's Journal," "Crusoe in England." These are like the cards that can be purchased in the gift shops of a museum. The form is excellent, the images are sharp, but there is something missing.



That something emerges in the opening paragraphs that Bishop wrote for *Brazil,* a book in the *Life* World Library series (1962). In the opening chapter, Bishop's problem was one of succinctly capturing the nature of the people and the country. Out of the manifold possibilities she selected the case of a newborn who was kidnapped from a maternity hospital in Rio. Through the story Bishop provides a feeling of the people's religion and their family structure, and opens a pinhole view onto other aspects of the people's value system, which is widened throughout the following chapters. Although *Brazil* was probably a potboiler for Bishop, there are a vitality and an organizing, judging consciousness behind her words in that text. Often, her poems are not unlike bibelots: the craftsmanship is obvious, but it isn't everything. □

High-Tech Conservatism

Peter Hannaford: *The Reagans: A Political Portrait;* Coward-McCann; New York.

Despite its subtitle, Peter Hannaford's *The Reagans* is more like a photograph than a portrait. To be sure it is a photograph sharply in focus and taken at close range by one of Reagan's longtime aides, and is therefore far superior to the mendacious and vicious caricatures popularized in the media. In depicting Reagan's years as Governor of California and his two campaigns for the Presidency, Mr. Hannaford shows Reagan as a sensitive but rational man, as an articulate, intelligent advocate of conservative policies, and as an astute politician able to chart strategy shrewdly by employing the full range of modern technical equip-

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ment and expertise. Nonetheless, for all its copious detail about the inner workings of Reagan's sophisticated political machinery, Hannaford's book lacks depth; in particular, it lacks a satisfactorily developed interpretation of the relationship between Reagan and contemporary American culture.

Indeed, though Reagan's valiant efforts to protect American freedom from Soviet might and from bureaucratic intrusion are truly laudable, one must wonder if the polished superficiality of this book—produced by a PR expert convinced that "politics is motion"—is not symptomatic of an Administration seemingly too preoccupied with the movement of polls, images, and "communication" and not sufficiently concerned with creating enduring symbols of the moral and intellectual heritage that makes our freedom worth preserving. Because both its subject and its manner reflect a great civilization, Joshua Reynolds' painting of Edmund Burke is justly famous after two centuries; despite its photographic accuracy, *The Reagans* will be swiftly forgotten. One hopes that its subject may yet inspire a true portrait. (BC) □

WASTE OF MONEY

A Video Arcadia

Donna Woolfolk Cross: *Mediaspeak: How Television Makes Up Your Mind;* Coward-McCann; New York.

by T. Mark Kulish

The place of television broadcasting in the lives of men since the end of the last world war indubitably accounts for the peculiar and unprecedented character of much of the folly and puerility of our time. Though a few contemporary essayists and other practitioners of the narrative arts have produced valuable and truthful accounts of this dreadful blight, the social sciences have, inevitably, laid claim to the exclusive discernment of the "real facts" about the "role of television in our society." Here we are offered the spectacle of an earnest young English professor posing as the grand sociologist of TV, marshaling in the process the testimony of a vast array of "experts," "Pulitzer Prize-winning authors," "research studies," "reports," and "surveys," as well as the evidence of anecdotes garnered from personal experience and unnamed "friends."

Mrs. Cross might have confined herself simply to exposing by means of satire the idiocy of television and that which it spawns. To the extent that she does so, her book is serviceable, but clearly satire is not an art at which she is adept. However, as her sociological pretensions indicate, her purposes lie elsewhere. She insists that the great evil of television is to be found not in the medium itself, nor even in its imprudent use, but rather in its control by the sinister "Establishment," the existence of which is assumed a priori. Invoking Herbert Marcuse and certain obscure semanticists, she conjures the vision of an America unscrupulously oppressed yet not really aware of it, an America cleverly lobotomized by a vast and monolithic conspiracy of "corporate interests," diabolical advertising agencies,

and cynical politicians.

Yet for one who claims to be so gravely concerned about the Orwellian nature of television, Mrs. Cross manifests a disturbing preoccupation with the object of her fears. Not once does she even hint at the remarkable solution of turning the set off. In fact, the blurb on the dust jacket notes that Mrs. Cross has herself made five appearances on the *Tonight Show* to promote one of her previous tomes. Moreover, apparently unconscious of the ironic effect, she relates how, in her days as a graduate student, she submitted to becoming an off-the-street subject for a mouthwash commercial, and how, more recently, she was moved to passionately denounce the "stereotyping" of women while watching a "sitcom" with one of her friends.

One might wonder: Why was she not relaxing that evening with an enlightening work of literature? The answer seems quite clear: Donna Cross is utterly fascinated with television as a vehicle of awesome power, and, like many other denizens of academia, she ardently wishes that the Right People possessed that power. Indeed, in her conclusion she asserts that the sine qua non of the renewal of America is the subjection of television to "democratic," "grass-roots" control. Here, then, is the latest variety of half-baked Marxism, the Marxism of the technicolor epoch. Once wrested from the stranglehold of the "Establishment," *television* is the means whereby America is to be made just, civilized, and decent. Mrs. Cross desperately wants to believe that television is all-powerful, and that the "Establishment" controls it absolutely. For when the great dialectical somersault comes, she and her friends will be the ones in front of the cameras and at the controls. Truly, she is television's willing captive. The fundamental poverty and menace of her cast of mind typifies the very shallowness that television tends to nurture. She resoundingly declares: "Our society surrounds us, a fundamental part of our lives." Judging from that sentence, one must conclude that Mrs. Cross would do better in advertising than in English. □

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No-Nukes Neurosis

Daniel Ford: *The Cult of the Atom: The Secret Papers of the Atomic Energy Commission;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

Scores of thousands of people died last year because of the routine operations of a major international industry; a like number will die this year for the same

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reason. Still, protests against the industry are isolated, voiced by relatively few people, and receive minimal media attention. The reason is that the industry in question, the distilling industry, is considered necessary by contemporary culture: for many liquor is *the* indispensable ingredient for any social gathering, and so the alcoholism, traffic fatalities, absenteeism, and illness it produces are quietly accepted. The nuclear-power industry, on the other hand, though it has never killed a single person and though its product is truly essential to society, is the object of a

frenzied but favorably publicized attack by thousands of self-righteous zealots. Wholly irrational in their fury, no-nukes partisans unfairly but routinely link peaceful utility companies with Hiroshima-like destruction, ignore real and potential economic benefits of atomic energy, trample laws protecting the property and operation of power plants, and scornfully refuse any kind of intelligent, point-by-point dialogue with nuclear-power advocates.

Within the context of such a civilized discussion, some of the information in Daniel Ford's *The Cult of the Atom* might prove genuinely helpful. With careful documentation, Mr. Ford reveals that neither government nor industry has always been fully candid about the potential risks of large reactors or about the possible failure of available safety systems. Therefore, his underscoring of some concrete suggestions made by technical analysts for reducing the chance of a major catastrophe, such as the redesigning of a key pressure valve, seems credible and worthwhile. But his tendentiousness reveals itself in occasional wild hyperbole, as when he labels the Three Mile Island accident (which neither killed nor injured anyone) "one of the worst industrial accidents in history" and again when he concludes by urging a general retreat from nuclear power because we are "at the edge of a precipice." More over, because he never discusses the ecological, economic, or political costs of relying entirely on conventional fuels, he obscures the noteworthy reasons that America may, like other modern industrialized states, nonetheless wish to take the acknowledged risks of nuclear power. There is, after all, *no* energy policy that does not expose us to significant liabilities or risks of some sort. Hence, despite their claim to be offering a work of "sober precision," Mr. Ford and his publisher doubtless realize that this book, with its sensational and unwarranted title, will not encourage objective sobriety in the current cultural milieu but will merely feed the no-nukes hysteria. And since shrewd and opportunistic leftists have often turned that hysteria to their own purposes, the unintended effects of the antinuclear movement may well prove even harder to live with than were the bootlegging and gangsterism of Prohibition. □

Murdering a Theory

Carol Houlihan Flynn: *Washed in the Blood;* Seaview/Putnam; New York.

Robert Scholes, in *Semiotics and Interpretation,* recommends that teachers should ask students who are learning how to interpret and write about texts to use a specific model. Scholes says, "If we ask students prematurely to achieve a discursive personality of their own, we force upon them the fraudulent disguising of other voices as their own—whether the voice be that of Cliff, the maker of notes, or of some other explicator or teacher." While this approach may sound outrageous, it really isn't. In fact, it can be traced back at least to Pope's "Essay on Criticism," wherein he urges the would-be critic to "Know well each ancient's proper character." Once certain rules and practices are internalized, then the writer can find his or her own voice. Or so the theory goes. In practice things can take another turn.

Carol Houlihan Flynn is a novelist, not a critic. Still, her approach in *Washed in the Blood,* a murder mystery, shows that she has taken several models and attempted to use them for her own purposes. Traces of many of these authorial models are evident in her text. Some of these spoors are minor: Swift emerges in that an incidental character, a querulous old professor, is named Von Struldbrugg. The book is set in Los Angeles in general and Hollywood in particular; the time is 1938. Thus, looming overall is Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* (1939), which is disguised about as effectively as the well-known "Hollywood" sign would be if it were painted red. Not only does Flynn attempt to achieve West's tone and to evoke the grotesque quality of the film colony, but she employs character types straight from *The Day of the Locust:* the child star, the midget. Smudges of Raymond Chandler (e.g., corrupt, brutal cops), John Steinbeck (e.g., the Okies), and, as a nod to filmdom, Alfred Hitchcock (e.g., the mistaken identity/doppelgänger situation) are evident, too. All of this wouldn't be so bad if the mystery weren't so turgid and the pastiche so clumsy. Another blow to pedagogy. □

Postmodern Schlock

Norman Mailer: *Ancient Evenings;* Little, Brown; Boston.

Over 700 pages of verbose, overblown, barren loquacity, spurious information, and plastic megalomania. Shocking, surreal acts of sexual and psychosomatic degeneracy are pompously and callously contrived as honest knowledge, bottomless wisdom, and subtle artistic insight. A commonsensical and detached reader can observe in the text the aging celebrity clown who pulls faces and makes eyes in the mirror and who sees himself as a literary giant. What's sad is that in America of the 1980's, the juggling of words and images of putridity *pour épater* is considered literature. The author is piously interviewed, and the gawking adulation of lowbrow syndicated reviewers is poured on him in semiliterate lifestyle sections of provincial newspapers. Which only remind us of how low we have sunk. □

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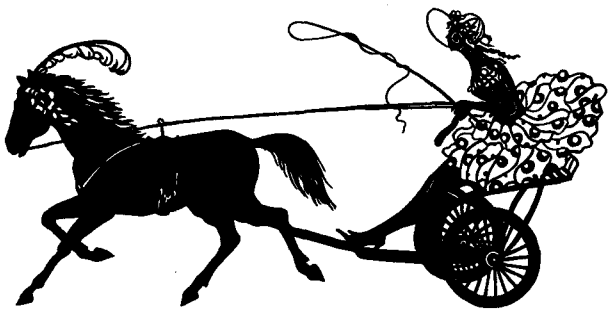
Editor's Comment

continued from page 5

how to live a rewarding life." We live in the post 60's-70's America; a killer tornado has demolished our cultural landscape leaving empty spaces, ruined edifices, and a rubble of directives for how to live twisted into caricatures. We mourn our missing valuables: smart integrity, practical optimism, cheerful rectitude. But there's the Woodstock generation out there paying dearly for the speciousness of radical incantations, and we must address it with rationality, not dogmas. A new stratum is emerging, perhaps the next American ruling class—the sons and daughters of rednecks and ethnics who, while melting in the pot, got burned by the alchemists of the 60's and were nauseated by chumming with the kids of the wealthy, liberal elites on the campuses and in big cities. They grew into media and computer mavens, and they now want to go back and live by Merle Haggard lyrics without relinquishing *Masterpiece Theater.* They don't know how to reconcile both so *we* must tell them, for they are an expanding and explosive constituency that is only superficially acculturated to the official modish clichés and not really convinced about the liberal syrup. To my mind, they are ready for a new, modified nationalism, a new manifest destiny. When talking to them we must not confuse morality and mores—as our less sophisticated brethren do and then wonder why so few will listen. We must make it crystal clear that we can distinguish between progress and change, freedom and liberation, past values and the permanence of values, and why we do so. We must pledge allegiance to legitimate and sensible human aspirations, and gently explain why we believe not in man's perfectibility but in his corrigibility. Whatever we have to say must be turned into an upbeat message that will put less emphasis on capitalism's merits, communism's menace, antiabortion, and school prayer as the ultimate in patriotism, and insist more on our ability to formulate a pattern for a meaningful existential fulfillment—that is, a reevaluated philosophy of life. Once we get that message across, it will occur to many that *we,* not the liberals, know more about peace of mind, priorities of emotions, and criteria of both joy and dignity, and that our intellectual commodities are of higher cultural quality than what is rammed down their throats by the liberal culture. If we succeed in making our agonies a high drama, our wisdom a fashion, our moral order an elegance, our ethical concerns a snobbishness, our quandaries an excitement, and our ambivalences a suavity—we will *have* our breakthrough in culture, and it is culture which, more subtly and enduringly than any other factor, determines power in a democracy.



Those who were enchanted with our triumph of 1980 and are now sorely disenchanted do not realize that it was just a political victory, frail and shallow by nature, not a revolution but a tremor that merely shuffled furniture without changing reality. If modern semiotics has it right, President Reagan seems to have forgotten that his election was a sign, and he seems unaware that he has now been badly desymbolized. Who is to be blamed for his desymbolization? I don't know; I'll never understand why he prefers to fraternize with the pro-communist demimonde of Hollywood or the assorted Cronkites, rather than to invite Otto Scott, Henry Regnery, or Anthony Harrigan for dinner. He ignores the fact that by doing the latter, he would help to shape our influence with badly needed exposure, which is of crucial significance for embellishing his own ideological image, not to mention a net intellectual profit from the conversation. Not long ago one could read an apt sentence in the *Wall Street Journal:* "Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Reagan are in office; they aren't in power." That's right, and they won't ever be in power unless they address themselves to *us,* the workers in the fields of cultural sophistication, for only *our* influence and mediation can solidify their ballot gains into a sway over minds—as was once done with Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy.

Nothing better symbolizes the liberal genius than its most successful exhortation: "Go East, young man, marry an heiress, and found a journal of opinion—for only a lot of money will assure the robustness of your liberal catechism. There's a lot of power in dollars earned by the old, traditional virtues, and then turned into pernicious intellectuality. The older the money, the more madcap the socialism you'll be able to preach." If conservative ideas are deficient in consequences, perhaps it's because we neglect to wangle money from heiresses (who would be willing to give it to us when they became infatuated with our refined charms) and get it instead from business people and politicians (who shortsightedly demand instant returns and dividends). After Reagan's ascent, there was a lot of talk about the freshness of our ideas. As we now can see, those ideas did not prevail. If they conquer in the future, it will be because the liberal culture is already a dustbin of moral routines and cognitive stereotypes, while we are still moved by moral passions and by the cognitive revelation that things *can* be so dazzingly correct and profoundly simple. Once we succeed in translating this wisdom into the language of our time, we shall be consequential winners.

—Leopold Tyrmand

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Counterfeiting Screen Gems

Betty Harper Fussell: *Mabel;* Ticknor & Fields; New Haven, CT.

James Hill: *Rita Hayworth: A Memoir;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

Hollywood is too much with us. Actors and actresses are everywhere: appearing in newspapers from the front pages to the feature sections; peering off the covers of *Time, Rolling Stone, McCall's,* and the grocery-stand tabloids; touting bras, wine, and other products in commercials; being recycled to sail on TV's *Love Boat.* Americans are addicted to celebrities; like junkies, they always crave more, more, more. This is not a new phenomenon, though the approach toward "stars" has changed. Once, stars were seen as special people who were better looking and more talented than members of the audience. People got a thrill imagining themselves to be a particular actor or actress or at least in their company. Warts and other blemishes were ignored. Now, however, the unsightly eruptions are the focus of attention. If Actor X wears a rug and if Actress Y has an overeating problem, then the viewers in the third row who have all of their locks and who specified "no butter" get a thrill by feeling superior.

Mabel Normand, who died in 1930, was one of the first Hollywood actresses who was "sold" to the movie-going public through modern marketing techniques. She made numerous films; from June 1913 to May 1916, for example, she appeared in 66 features. While few now recognize her name, many have probably seen her work: she often appeared with the Keystone Cops; she and Fatty Arbuckle regularly mugged on the screen together; she worked with Chaplin in some of his early appearances. Few haven't heard of Mary Pickford, who was a contemporary of Mabel. Why this should be so is a question that Betty Fussell makes lunges at answering in her panegyric to Mabel. She never answers it, though the question is simple enough. It all comes down to the American love of celebrities. Before the sickness that causes adulation of people like John Belushi infected moviegoers, there was a sense that the public and private image had to square. When people looked up to the reproductions on the screen, they liked to think that the originals were basically good people. Perhaps Will H. Hays, president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association from 1922-45, was a bit unsophisticated in his drafting of the Production Code (1930), but his opposition to the "immoral" off-screen activities of film stars did reflect then-prevalent social attitudes.

Fussell is a product of our time. She constantly refers to herself throughout Mabel's biography. Presumably this is being done to mimic the style of Raymond Chandler. The effect, however, is one wherein the biographer appears to think herself a star by association. Fussell explains that she grew up watching movies and says, "Later, when I found I was being 'liberated' from my sexist past . . . I needed to define the American girl and my own tomboy rebellion." Mabel was known as the "I-Don't-Care Girl," so Fussell finds her to be a wonderful paradigm. That Mabel was involved in an unsolved murder case, took drugs, and led a generally dissolute life (certainly she had bouts of good behavior) is of little concern to the biographer. Mary Pickford becomes an enemy. Sneers Fussell: "Pickford [not 'Mary,' though Normand is always 'Mabel'] controlled her public image of purity as coldly as a sanitary engineer." The implication is that Mabel was "with it"—out in the open and up front—and therefore superior to Mary. There is no evidence presented that Pickford had anything to hide, but the "liberated" Fussell indicates that if she did have some dirty laundry, then Pickford would have had the temerity to keep it in a hamper. Fortunately, movie audiences once admired that sort of thing, and so Pickford has endured. Unfortunately, in the age of *Edie,* the Mabel Normands will come to the fore.

Rita Hayworth: A Memoir is another product of the 80's. The author, James Hill, was Hayworth's third husband. It isn't a book of these times because it is *Mommie Dearest Revisited* or anything of a similar nature (actually, Hayworth, the sultry Love Goddess, seems quite nice) but because the author takes the spotlight. An honest title would feature the author's name in the place of the actress's. The book recounts a beau's stratagem not simply to win the hand of Hayworth but to force her hand to do his bidding: star in a production *he* was formulating, one that would remold her image into the one *he* thought best. Rita Hayworth got on a train and didn't look back. (SM) □

Please Pass the Pepto

***Eating Raoul;* Written by Richard Blackburn and Paul Bartel; Directed by Paul Bartel; 20th Century Fox.**

Eating Raoul is one of those films that swinging New York Know-Its call "outrageous." Their clones on the other coast call it "bodacious." In looking for something to call it that doesn't refer to the spoor of farm animals, I've hit upon the term "black and blue" movie. This is not to be mistaken with having anything to do with *film noir* and Danish filmmaking. *Eating Raoul* is the type of movie that leaves the audience feeling dirty and bruised. Anyone who has ever watched a grainy 16-mm film shown on a bedsheet hanging in a garage or motel room would immediately recognize the texture and deft

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plotting of this feature. Action is broad, fast, moronic. There must be a "hook," a would-be plot. Unlike a smoker, *Eating Raoul* doesn't concentrate on providing film footage of skin—though it's not inconceivable that an unedited version is appearing in select shops throughout the slums of the U.S. Still, sex of the callous and perverted variety is the hook of this oleaginous production. This movie is of value only in a clinical sense: it shows the dangers of letting camera equipment fall into the wrong hands. (SM) □

MUSIC

A Crock of Rock

Guy Peellaert and Nik Cohn: *Rock Dreams;* Rogner & Bernhard/Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

by Stephen Macaulay

When John Lennon was shot dead in 1980, that December day took on the quality of a scene in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* for many Americans: the scene in which everything comes to a halt. Newscasts were full of it; newspapers ran front-page maps showing the scene at the Dakota and lengthy retrospectives. For the youth of the 60's, those who were then, presumably, holding down jobs within the structure of the Establishment, the day seemed to mark an end—of something. For the children, those precocious adults in their early teens, of the 80's, it meant just an addition to their necropolis (Morrison, Joplin, Hendrix. . .). The question then, as now, should have been: So what? It is terrible when a human being is killed by another for no reason, and in that respect Lennon's death is a cause for pause: How far has mankind really advanced? But Lennon, since the day of his death, has taken on an aura far beyond anything imaginable when he was a member of The Beatles. Then he was just a rhythm-guitar player with a mediocre voice. He liked to think of himself as something more, but he just didn't transcend the importance of a man who was part of a musical group that sold plenty of records. So he left the group and concentrated his forces with Yoko Ono, the woman who had the execrable taste to feature on an album cover a photograph of the bloodied glasses her husband wore when murdered. His objective: to make Political/Artistic Statements, writ large. His cachet as ex-Beatle automatically gained him an audience. Lennon knew that, and he took advantage of it. He became rock 'n' roll activist nonpareil. And he still sold records, though not as many as before. But that was okay: ex-partner Paul McCartney sold millions, but he was merely a tunesmith; Lennon was more. Almost three years after his death he is much more: Lennon's image has been cast in a material that seems to take on an added luster as time passes.

Witness a cover story in *The New Republic* (May 2, 1983): "John Lennon Versus the F.B.I." It was written by a history professor at the University of California at Irvine who is engaged in a bit of hagiography, recapturing those precious moments of the late 60's and early 70's, when the answer to the rhetorical question with which he opens his article—"Is rock 'n' roll revolutionary?"—was a resounding *yes.* Now, of course, all rockers, no matter how bizarre in appearance or manner, are less concerned with politics and more concerned with capturing their performances on videotape for presentation on cable television's Music Television (MTV) network and with getting corporate sponsorship (Sony, Schlitz, etc.) for their tours: members of the petite bourgeoisie, one and all. The author of the article cites chapter and verse from the documents he was able to secure from the FBI and the Immigration and Naturalization Service through the Freedom of Information Act. All signs presented indicate that the government didn't think too highly of the activities of Lennon. There must have been some reason for that. Consider one instance described at great length: a rally held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in December 1971 in support of John Sinclair, a founder of a self-proclaimed "revolutionary" organization, The White Panthers, who had been incarcerated for selling marijuana. Lennon and Ono joined up with Chicago-8 notables Jerry Rubin, Dave Dellinger, Rennie Davis, and Bobby Seale for the event. Lennon drew 15,000 people—not the conventional mega-crowd count, but more than enough people to fill Crisler Arena. The nonsinging politicos rode on Lennon's coattails. Lennon, according to *The New Republic* piece, told the audience: "We came here to show and to say to all of you that apathy isn't it, that we *can* do something. Okay, so flower power didn't work. So what. We start again." So the FBI was interested in Lennon's activities and saw the man as a threat to the national order, as an undesirable. So what?

The New Republic article presents John Lennon as some sort of Hyde Park orator, a lovingly quirky character, transported across the Atlantic. The FBI, shown to be less than subtle in matters of interpretation, is the boorish heavy. The tone here is, remarkably, one of outrage, not of amusement over the seeming incompetence of the "Enemy," or, in the parlance of the 60's, "The Man." Lennon's partiality to drugs was no secret; cryptic analysis of his "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" (LSD, remember?) isn't necessary to figure that out. The FBI, of course, was interested in his drug-taking activities since any bust would give the government a lever with which to catapult Lennon out of the country. The article's author is incensed about that; he is more hot over the fact that the agent who

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wrote a memo dealing with Lennon's alleged pharmaceutical habits didn't know "that 'downers'—barbiturates—are not narcotics." To quote the title of a Lennon song: Imagine.

The author points out that 20,000 people had protested during the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968, that 250,000 congested Washington for the Vietnam Mobilization, and that 500,000 grooved at Woodstock. Given the facts that musical entertainment wasn't a drawing card in Chicago, that the Viet Mob event had aging folksingers on its agenda, and that Woodstock had no "superstar" of Lennon's caliber, it should be clear that the FBI would have been derelict in its duty if it didn't keep tabs on a very rich and powerful man who publicly favored the subversion of law. In Ann Arbor Lennon's point was that marijuana laws were not merely too restrictive, but criminal. During those days posters appeared in Ann Arbor that featured automatic rifles entwined with stalks of cannabis. The main purpose of the posters was to promote some rock concert or another—typically a benefit for a "defense fund"—but the ulterior motive was there in plain sight. The violence and deaths of those days, naturally, are not cited in the article in question. Certainly only a very small percentage of those at Crisler Arena would have considered firing anything more destructive than a water pistol, but there are always people around like Mark Chapman, Lennon's slayer.

Lennon is now considered by some—including, apparently, the author of *The New Republic* piece—to have been a prophet of peace who was crushed more by "The System" than by a deranged fan. The words spoken in Ann Arbor—"so flower power didn't work"—belie his putting any oil on troubled waters. One popular photo from the 60's shows a young woman placing a flower into the barrel of a rifle held by a National Guardsman. What did Lennon's comment do to that image? Given the death of "flower power" that he declared; the rallies simply fascist in nature; the posters featuring drugs and rifles; and the appearance of rock bands like Ann Arbor's MC-5, equipped with Ché-like bandoliers, it is clear that Lennon's effect as a role model for unformed youth (Chapman reportedly claimed that *he* was Lennon) was—and is—pernicious. Granted, as Lennon-

ists would point out, Lennon himself didn't appear with guns, and he did write and sing a tune, "Revolution," that includes a disclaimer about participation in violent action. But the theater of his participation in the Ann Arbor event alone more than destroys any illusion of his pacifism.

It would be both too simple and incorrect to assume that adulation of Lennon is merely characteristic of *The New Republic* and its readers. Sadly, it is much more pervasive. For example, during the same week that the issue in question was available, *USA Today* ran a number of opinion pieces about the Freedom of Information Act on its editorial page (April 27, 1983). One column was written by a man identified as one who "covers the media for Gannett News Services." Gannett, of course, owns *USA Today* and a number of other newspapers. The columnist identifies himself in his first paragraph as having been "an anti-war student journalist in the late 1960's at Rutgers University." One thing can be said for that admission: at least it indicates that the journalist is forthright about his lack of so-called journalistic objectivity. The man, writing on behalf of the Freedom of Information Act, claims that because of the act, "hundreds of journalists and scholars have been . . . successful in unearthing government documents, resulting in revelations of public benefit and interest." He then lists four of these "revelations." The first: "Disclosures about the Nixon Administration's surveillance of the late Beatle John Lennon." *The New Republic* goes to a minor fraction of the U.S. households; *USA Today* is rapidly achieving preeminence in circulation figures among *all* newspapers in the country. And there it is, Gannett's man putting John Lennon above the six sailors who died on the *U.S.S. Ranger* (number two on the list), and the design problems with the Ford Pinto and Firestone 500 tires, and tampon-related toxic-shock syndrome (collectively number three). His final entry puts John Lennon in the correct crowd, one that is not as laudable as the columnist implies that it is: Sacco and Vanzetti, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, and Alger Hiss.

Perhaps the most heinous thing that John Lennon did was to make the use of drugs almost de rigueur for young people in America. Marijuana became socially acceptable among groups of teenagers in the 60's; Lennon sang about "Instant Karma" and his listeners wanted it. Members of Eastern religions who seek karma know that it is something that they can spend their lives trying to achieve and which may not be experienced. American teens in the 60's and 70's regularly led the lists of leading consumer groups, primarily because of the disposable income lavished upon them by parents; the surveys tabulated only money spent on legal products, not drugs, which would have sent totals soaring. Such people wanted karma instantaneously; they tried to buy it in little plastic bags or wrapped in alumi-

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num foil. As mentioned, those who grew up listening to Lennon and who were in their late 20's and early 30's at the time of his death were then, presumably, holding jobs. Some of those who had succumbed to that siren's song (the gender is, admittedly, incorrect, but the effect isn't) were upwardly mobile, professional people—salesmen, account executives, teachers, journalists, etc. Taste is an ever-changing thing. Those who lived on Coca-Cola in their youth often end up loving demitasse; those who once accepted steak only in an almost burned condition sometimes later relish steak tartare. Similarly, some of those flush money-makers who smoked marijuana in their teens felt—and feel—a need for something rather more befitting their station in life: cocaine. Cocaine is, of course, more worldly and urbane than "grass." At cocktail parties lines of the white powder can be snorted through rolled-up $100 bills; marijuana cigarettes are not only more messy, but it is becoming gauche to smoke anything in public. *Time* magazine, in an uncommon bucking of the liberal social trends and lifestyle, recently exposed cocaine for the killer that it is (April 11, 1983). Repeatedly, the article quotes users and ex-users who, given their ages, were undoubtedly influenced by Lennon, and if not by him specifically, then by the general environment of which he is representative. To wit: "Margaret, 30, a saleswoman for a clothing manufacturer," "Renê, 29, a Western publishing executive," "Steve, 30, a Miami land salesman," "Chuck, 34, a San Francisco insurance executive," etc. The article shows—painfully, realistically—people financially and morally bankrupting themselves, groveling in filth and slime for a snort or a shot of "Instant Karma."

Ten years ago, a book entitled *Rock Dreams* appeared. The book comprises 120 paintings by Belgian artist Guy Peellaert that are verbally supported by captions from rock critic Nik Cohn. It has been updated for a new edition with an introduction by Michael Herr, who announces: *"Rock Dreams* are old-timer's dreams." Remember, as Abbie Hoffman advised, age 30 is the great divide; Margaret, Steve, and Chuck are at or past it; René is almost there. It is a book for them. The illustrations show slices of life from the 50's and 60's that are essentially manifest wishes of fans. Consider the cover: Mick Jagger, Bob Dylan, John Lennon, and Elvis Presley all sitting at a soda fountain together. It's better than the long-desired Beatles reunion; Bob Dylan at George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh; the Beatles' visit with Elvis; and the little pictures of the Beatles that could be found on the cover of the Rolling Stones' *For Their Satanic Majesties Request* album. Some of the paintings are, like the cover, ideal group shots. One that includes British crooner and star of Las Vegas Tom Jones with Ricky Nelson and, more remarkably, Eddie Cochran and Ritchie Valens, among others, is, to be generous, curious. Annette Funicello is shown in her pre-Skippy peanut butter days along with Frankie Avalon, who then hadn't even dreamed of sailing on TV's *Love Boat.* On the book goes, through the 60's: the Beatles in white tuxedos for *Magical Mystery Tour,* the sloppy feast shot of the Rolling Stones set up for *Beggar's Banquet.* These and others are redone by Peellaert. A number are invented: Simon and Garfunkel riding on a subway train, which almost combines "Sounds of Silence" and "Homeward Bound." There are ideal pictures: Bob Weir and Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead, Grace Slick and Paul Kantner of the Jefferson Airplane, and Country Joe McDonald (all misidentified in the caption) all riding in the front seat of Ken Kesey's Prankster bus. These are balanced by sad ones: Jim Morrison in his Parisian bathtub, drawing the water for his final dip. The terms *ideal* and *sad,* of course, are those that would be applied by the ideal reader. There are inexplicable pictures: how can Ray Charles drive a car? There are anachronistic ones: "Little" Stevie Wonder wouldn't have begged outside of the Apollo Theater when a Temptations show was on because (A) Wonder grew up in Detroit, not New York; (B) he would have been appearing on the same Motown-organized bill, as the record company was very protective of its acts. There are poorly illustrated ones: has Jimmy Page ever resembled an overweight Francis Ford Coppola?

There can be several approaches to this book. One is to take it as a document showing the sordid, gruesome nature of rock culture (which would make it a big hit for the before-mentioned teenage necrophiliacs). However, among the most sordid-looking performers shown is Jerry Lee Lewis (with his young bride and as a drunk), who isn't exactly representative of that culture: a few months ago, a televised awards show from Nashville hailed him. One of the most gruesome illustrations is of Sam Cooke: dead in a motel room. Cooke was a rhythm-and-blues artist, not a rocker. All of the rock stars—with the exception of Janis Joplin, shown sleeping with the ubiquitous Southern Comfort bottle—are doing things that they did in photos shown in *Rolling Stone* and *Crawdaddy;* all are, in their own peculiar way, vital. This brings up another approach to the book, one that is supported by Herr's comment and *The New Republic* article about John Lennon. *Rock Dreams* is a coffee-table book for display at cocaine parties, a nostalgic text that can be used to generate memories of nights at the Fillmore (East or West) and days at Woodstock—or Altamont. Who cares if some of the paintings look like the black velvet canvases available on street corners and if others look like the clip art that *National Enquirer* used to pass off as "real" shots? After all, the pictures of Alice Cooper when he still wore face paint and proudly sang of his persona (on the *Killer* album) "he's sick, he's obscene" and of a drunken Stewart when he was still "Rod the Mod" make up for any lapses. Such people may have been—or may *be*—sinners, but *Rock Dreams* shows saints: their halos are crooked, bent, fragmented, shattered, but that's what it's all about. □

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Letter from Europe: Blending Mayonnaise While Europe Crumbles

by Allan C. Carlson

To state that the Atlantic Alliance is deeply troubled raises few eyebrows today. Yet a firsthand look at the weariness besetting the West is still unsettling. Conversations in Rome, Paris, and London this March with European journalists, academics, and politicians left the impression that the forces dividing the Alliance—economic nationalism, the scramble for the short-run advantage, cultural lassitude—are now stronger than those holding it together. Only fear of the void which the collapse of the Western alliance would leave now binds up the dilapidated system; its animating spirit seems nearly dead.

In one respect, this state is puzzling. For just as in the decade following World War II when the pillars of Atlanticism—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the European Economic Community (EEC)—were set in place, the Europeans face domestic challenges highlighting the continued importance of the American connection and the practical necessity of common response. Nonetheless, each nation seems to be turning sullen and inward.

Recession has engendered the familiar strains. While the United Kingdom resembles the U.S. in showing early signs of economic recovery, 3.5 million Britons remain out of work and on that nation's genteel dole. An enormous, presumably Labour-erected sign tallying the 400,000 unemployed in London alone haunts Parliament from across the Thames. Margaret Thatcher's success in reducing inflation and nearly balancing her budget is overshadowed by an inability to do much about Britain's low productivity levels and her reluctance to tackle that land's real economic monsters: the nationalized industries.

Meanwhile, the Italian and French economies remain stalled. The lira, one economist suggested, has become "a joke currency." Inflation in Italy remains in double digits. If personal encounters with several furtive men along Rome's *Via Veneto* are any indication, exchange controls have lifted the street value of the U.S. dollar 15 percent above the official rates. Italy's welfare system grinds along. One out of every ten Italian adults is now on permanent disability; another 25 percent receive retirement pensions. Not coincidentally, the government's projected deficit for 1983 represents 15 percent of the nation's total national income and a staggering 43 percent of government revenue. Yet while aboveground Italy stagnates, an underground economy booms. Nearly half of the "unemployed" in Naples reportedly hold full-time, non-taxpaying jobs. The French, sporting an increasingly dishevelled Socialist-Communist coalition government, seem unable to stop their slow economic slide. President Francois Mitterrand wavers, perplexed over the failure of his socialist nostrums and privately banking on American recovery eventually to pull France along. The franc, although devalued three times during the past two years, remains overvalued. Harsh currency controls are keeping ill-tempered Frenchmen in the *métropole* this summer. "Social investment" through the recently nationalized banks, touted as a vehicle to stimulate "high-tech" industries, has instead become a crude tool for Chicago-style patronage. Phone calls to the bankers from Socialist members of the National Assembly on behalf of politically friendly constituents with "worthy" projects have become the sorry, albeit predictable, means of "socially allocating" new capital. The lights on the *Champs Elysées*, dimmed during the oil crises of the 70's, are bright now. Yet the gendarmes posted there with automatic rifles symbolize the troubled reality within the new democratic socialist paradise.

Trade wars loom. The EEC, Roman economist Antonio Martino noted, was founded on the inspiration that "trade will unite us, politics will divide." That spirit has faded. "The ideals of the EEC no longer exist," stated British economist John Burton from the University of Birmingham. "Protectionism is the gravest threat to the survival of the West," Professor Martino added. Bitter wrangling within the EEC over innocuous issues (e.g., the content guidelines for mayonnaise) do suggest that the "free trade" ideal no longer unites.

Europe's immigration problem strikes a visitor with startling immediacy. The French, while officially styling themselves as brotherly comrades of the "Third World" and exhibiting (at least in Paris) a continued fondness for exotic complexions, are increasingly anxious. The municipal elections held last March often turned on the race question. Even the Socialists now agree that "something must be done" about the flow of North Africans and other non-Europeans into the country. Britain's new Nationalities Act sharply restricts the access of former colonial peoples to full British citizenship. Nonetheless, tension continues. While Indians and Pakistanis seem to be accepted (in fact, their eagerness to work long hours in shop and factory appears to be lifting not a few Englishmen out of their security-induced stupor), West Indian blacks are cited in both academic circles and pubs as "the difficulty." Attending a session of the House of Lords one evening, I sat fascinated as the Noachian peers engaged in heated, race-tinged debate over the maintenance of immigration records on computers. The immigration question is clearly heightening the parochialism of West European societies and accelerating the centrifugal forces affecting the Alliance.

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In face of these internal difficulties, many Europeans find the United States to be a convenient scapegoat. Reflecting weak economic education, a pitiful level of economic reporting, and the perceptions of American political life projected by the *International Herald Tribune,* popular opinion in France and Italy tends to blame the Reagan Administration for virtually all woes. Reaganomics is regarded as a policy aimed at crushing the poor. Frenchmen commonly refer to a perverse American conspiracy to wreck Europe's economy through Presidential manipulation of interest and inflation rates to the advantage of the U.S. "Milton Friedman is the murderer of civilization,"—opines one politician; this comment suggests the prevailing level of French mainstream economic insight.

The inertia of domestic European politics further erodes the foundations of the Alliance. In Italy, the Christian Democrats have ruled almost continuously since World War II. But they are a party without substantial principles. Born at the turn of the century out of papal-inspired opposition to the unified, secular Italian state, the Christian Democrats have served primarily as a brake on the policies of other parties, be they those of the Communists or the so-called "lay parties"—the Republicans, the Liberals, and the Socialists—which are rich in ideas but minuscule in size. Consequently, Italians do not usually vote *for* a party, platform, or person; they vote *against* someone or something. The result is stagnation and drift. For different reasons, France also evidences political petrification. In the three centuries since the accession of Louis XIV, the French social order has always presumed the all-present state. The civil service remains popularly viewed as the foundation of society. Even in the aftermath of conservative victory in March's municipal elections, Gaullist leader Raymond Barre, in a television interview, attributed the right's triumph to widespread fear that respect for the state was *declining* under the Socialists. While conservative Parisian Mayor Francois Chirac has lately sounded a few tentative "Austrian" notes, the concept of an open, market-oriented society simply does not generate much emotion below the Channel and west of the Rhine.

Journalists in each country also described an accelerating loss of confidence in the U.S. The European gener-

ation shaped by World War II accepted American leadership because its post-war security depended on it and because the Americans showed confidence and sense of purpose. However, one conservative British editor suggested that most Europeans no longer share the essentially American impression that the Soviet Union is an "evil" force in the world. The gas-pipeline issue and the resulting American imposition of economic sanctions on its Allies, he added, had badly soured relations. Recent years have also evidenced rebirth of the old attitude that America is too immature to be an effective world power. The shift from America's "messianic" anticommunism in the early 1960's to realpolitik in the early 1970's to vague moral earnestness under Jimmy Carter and back to anticommunism under Reagan make long-term American ambitions unclear.

Nearly absent in these conversations was a sense of common civilization; the disease of cultural relativism has spread deep. Those who created the institutions of the Atlantic Alliance in the 1940's and 50's—among them Adenauer, de Gaulle, Schumann, and de Gasperi—intellectually, emotionally, and personally shared in the triumph and tragedy of modern European man. Compared to the self-styled leaders of the current decade, they were giants. Talk in the late 1940's of a rebirth of Euro-American civilization and reference to the fledgling Common Market as a democratic heir to the Holy Roman Empire was something more than a public-relations ploy. Today, those images are the province of old men. Anemic attempts by well-connected, gray-haired, fretful groups such as the Atlantic Council to rekindle the civilizational flame stumble over liberal guilt and self-doubt. "There must be a set of beliefs and principles that can serve as bulwarks against which the claims of conflicting value systems can be assessed," the Atlantic Council of the U.S. characteristically declared in its agonized little volume, *The Successor Generation* (1981). But the Council proceeded to deplore attempts at propagating "any particular set of religious or moral beliefs" which might infringe on the absolute right of youth to examine all belief systems without prejudice. As the panel's peripatetic "student member" explained to undoubtedly nodding heads, "We must be careful . . . that teachers don't start pouring ideology, even one we accept, down students' throats." Such is the state of cultural identity and moral courage in the West today.

If hope is to be found within the Alliance, it is among trends in ideas and fashion. For the first time in more than a generation, Marxism appears to be on the intellectual defensive. In Italy it has become fashionable for professors to crack anticommunist jokes in university classrooms. France's "new philosophers," who shook the intelligentsia a decade ago with books such as Jean-Francois

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Revel's *Neither Marx Nor Jesus* and Jean Marie Benoist's *Marx is Dead,* remain the intellectual avant-garde. The French Minister of Culture's widely publicized February conference on French culture, which took an abusive anti-American tone, became an object of ridicule among the men and women of ideas. In Great Britain, philosopher Roger Scruton noted that it was no longer socially necessary for a university scholar to call himself a Marxist.

Will the Alliance survive? Perhaps. The ability of governments to muddle through should not be underestimated. Although the midget politicians feud over mayonnaise, pipelines, and the eschatological meaning of imported American TV shows, they fear the unknown of renewed internecine nationalism far more. Yet unless the cultural offspring of Europe rediscover an ethical framework for their ideological struggle against the East, recharge the moral richness of their societies, and reaffirm their bond of common civilization, the Atlantic Alliance will be no more than an antiquated facade; a shell with all the contemporary diplomatic relevance of the Holy Alliance. □

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Freud . . . from New York

by John Clifton

I much enjoyed Dr. Richard Peters's attempt to reconcile conservatism with psychoanalysis, as I likewise enjoy most of what you publish in the *Chronicles.* Yet the conclusion reached—that the popular linkage between liberal culture and psychoanalysis "requires reevaluation"—I find mostly unjustified. It seems to me the connection was *reinforced,* not lessened, by Peters's letter.

Two statements (actually asides) in the early part of his "comment" reveal the problem: "I am a practicing psychoanalyst and think that I am reasonably entitled to speak *with some authority* on this particular *subject"* and "The Freudian man is always in a struggle to *expand his conscious* ego and come to terms with his instinctual urges" (emphasis added). There you have it. The underpinnings of "individualist" psychoanalysis, no less than collectivism, turn on the eternal secularist principle of gnosticism.

A Marxist is a gnostic optimist, while a Freudian is a gnostic pessimist; the one seeks human plasticity in totalist praxis, while the other personally examines human limits *so as to subdue them.* But both are committed to the core concept of equating expanded awareness, or infinite exploring, with manipulative power over the object explored. The former will collectivize the community; the latter will amass and allocate collective knowledge about man, turning human nature into another "subject" about which one can become an expert "authority." But both, to repeat, are gnostic expansionists. In fact, psychoanalysis is not even pessimistic in the ultimate sense, precisely because it shares the optimistic collectivist premise that consciousness, an ever-studious "savior" knowledge, conquers all. The utopian wants immediate and easy revolt, the diagnosed man an earned triumph. Thus Messrs. Marx and Freud are actually quite comfortable with each other in the kitchen of modernity; they are different merely in velocity and temperature, as well as in the degree of residual traditionalism. They differ the way a freezer and an oven do: although they serve opposite functions, they belong in the same room.

Mr. Clifton is a writer and illustrator.

Thus it is irrelevant for Peters to observe that liberals "do not like psychoanalysis," for the truth is that even the most disparaging secular view of humanity is preferable to a *transcendental* or *nonsecular* one. A socialist can "not like," yet tolerate the notion that "a bad tree can produce good fruit once it accepts the reality that it's a bad tree" (which is what psychoanalysis teaches, in brief), simply because psychoanalysis still allows him to face his constitutional drives and gifts on a mechanistic and materialistic basis.

Mr. Voegelin has pointed out that, since time out of mind, gnosticism has been a natural impulse of secular man, one that is always leading him either toward the deification of the state (socialism), or into self-deification (of which psychoanalysis is one mechanism). Wherever man ceases to meditate on the transcendent he spontaneously moves toward increasing human consciousness, idolatrizing it in its various forms: education, reason, psychology, self-knowledge, scholarship, activism, travel, progressivism, hedonism, careerism, escapism, even "new consciousness" occultism, and finally societal collectivism. Is there any doubt that psychoanalysis belongs to this group, while conservatism decidedly does not?

Conservative belief, as I see it, is rooted in transcendental traditions, Judeo-Christian and Classical, that are antithetical to the animalist and utopian reductionisms of Freud and Marx. Traditionalist man, even traditional humanists, would never put the word *love* among a list of carnalities such as "rage, lust, greed," as Dr. Peters does, let alone attribute virtues to instinct. The traditionalist would rather share Goethe's belief that "everything is conducted by spirits" and therefore credit all nobility to transcendence or disciplined submission to divine authority. In my view, the conservative would not believe that man is *in any way* self-rectifying, or that he possesses somehow "higher" instincts (like reason) with which to control his

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baser nature. (In fact, after the "cultured nazis" and pacifist terrorists of the 1960's, I suspect that reason and culture are the first things to surrender to militarism and egotism.)

I believe that besides investing in God-consciousness instead of self-consciousness, conservatives support a more "*connaître*" kind of knowing as opposed to the infinite academization of secular expertise. Perception of truth is thus achieved via myth, art, metaphysics, faith, hope, hobby, taste, etc. This contrasts sharply with the scientistic reductionism of the psychoanalyst-socialist, and leads to decentralized variety in human personality and vocation. Whereas the gnostic Freudian can at best yield only a vaguely "realistic" man, while the gnostic Marxist obliterates the division of labor for the sake of his "inevitable" ideal, the conservative offers a universe of "realisms" and destinies, a multitude of satisfied individuals content precisely because they stick to their finite interests, indifferent to infinite self-assessment.

Finally, I should add that Dr. Peters is being strategically incomplete when he severs Freudian psychoanalysis from supposedly "anticonsequence" and utopian therapies. Actually, the nature of the more explicitly optimistic humanist psychotherapies, from Maslow to est to sexology, couldn't be more Freudian and consequence-oriented. That's their problem. They use "consequences" the same way earlier therapists did: to mask an imperious reductionism of human character down to vacantly "informed," utilitarian animalism. The "self-fulfillment," "self-actualization" movements are natural children and grandchildren of the original toxic, self-salvational methodologies of psychotherapy, and no well-intentioned amount of squirming by Dr. Peters can dissolve that fact, or *its* consequences.

. . . from California

by Frank Goble

Dr. Richard Peters (in his "Comment," March 1983 *Chronicles of Culture)* wants us to believe that Sigmund Freud's "picture of man" is "congruent with the ideas of the framers of the Constitution." People on the political left, he points out, especially Marxists, don't like Freud's ideas or his psychoanalysis. While it may be true that Freud's ideas are "further right" (closer to the Founding Fathers) than those of Marx, Pavlov, Skinner, and other behaviorists-environmentalists, his ideas are profoundly different from those of Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, Washington, and other influential American founders.

The late O. Hobart Mowrer, one of America's leading research psychologists and past president of the American Psychological Association, said in 1966: "For more than a decade now, it has been evident that something is seriously amiss in contemporary psychiatry and clinical psychology. Under the sway of Freudian psychoanalysis, these disciplines have not validated themselves either diagnostically or therapeutically. Their practitioners, as persons, have not manifested any exceptional grasp on the virtues and strengths they purportedly help others to acquire. And the impact of their philosophy of life and conception of man in society as a whole has been subtly subversive."

Richard LaPierre, Stanford sociologist and author of *The Freudian Ethic* (1959), referred to it as "the ethic that is most commonly advocated by the intellectual leaders of the United States." The result of the Freudian ethic, he went on to say, is "the idea that man cannot and should not be expected to be provident, self-reliant, or venturesome, and that he must and should be supported, protected, socially maintained."

Edward R. Pinckney, M.D., former editor of the *American Medical Journal*, has written a scathing denunciation of Freudian theory in *The Fallacy of Freud and Psychoanalysis.* He states: "Since the advent of that doctrine [psychoanalysis], our culture and even our daily activities have been penetrated to the point where morality is not only outmoded, immorality is virtually licensed. There is not one single 'scientific' experiment on record to support the doctrine that psychoanalysis—as defined by Freud as a form of treatment for mental illness—has, or can, cure anybody or any illness. In contrast, there is a wealth of documented information to show that the results of psychoanalysis are not only unsuccessful, but what is even worse, have been harmful."

I could cite many other similar comments by people thoroughly familiar with Freudian theory and practice, but perhaps the best way to show that Freud's thinking is not compatible with that of America's leading founders is to examine the statements of Freud himself. Freud ridiculed the Judeo-Christian ethic and the concepts of free will and rational man. Freud thought that most human behavior was the result of subconscious drives. Intelligence, he said, played a "minor part" in human affairs "as compared with the life of instincts." Higher values such as freedom, justice, love, and cooperation were not natural. "I do not have a very high opinion of the bulk of mankind," he wrote. "I feel that the irrational forces in man's nature are so strong, that the rational forces have little chance of success against it. A small minority may be able to live a life of reason, but most men are more comfortable living with their delusions and superstitions than with the truth." Of religion Freud said, "I have already found a place for religion by putting it under the category of the neurosis of mankind." And, "the whole thing [religion] is so patently infantile, so incongruous with reality, it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life."

Dr. Freud made numerous modifications and additions to this theory, but his

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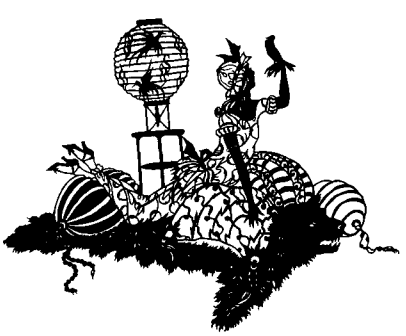
basic assumptions remained virtually the same through the years. "In the course of his development towards culture," Freud stated, "man acquired a dominating position over his fellow creatures in the animal kingdom. Not content with this supremacy, however, he began to place a gulf between his nature and theirs. He denied the possession of reason to them, and to himself he attributed an immortal soul, and made claims to a divine descent which permitted him to annihilate the bonds of community between him and the animal kingdom. . . . We all know that, little more than a half a century ago, the researches of Charles Darwin and his collaborators and predecessors put an end to this assumption on the part of man. Man is not a being different from animals or superior to them; he himself originates in the animal race and is related more closely to some of its members and more distantly to others."

Humans, according to Freud, were driven by powerful instincts which resided in the unconscious, the id. "These instincts," he wrote, "fill it [the Id] with energy but it has no organization and no unified will, only an impulsion to obtain satisfaction for the instinctual needs, in accordance with the pleasure principle. . . . Naturally, the Id knows no values, no good, no evil, no morality . . . culture has to call up every possible reinforcement to erect barriers against the aggressive instinct in man. . . . Hence, too, its ideal command to love one's neighbor as oneself, which is really justified by the fact that nothing is so completely at variance with original human nature as this." Freud stressed the almost unreconcilable conflict between the selfish desires of the individual and his society. "Every individual," he said, "is virtually an enemy of civilization. . . . Men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbor is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and kill him."

The Founding Fathers believed in free will and individual responsibility. Freud stressed man's helplessness. In fairness to Freud, it must be stated that he was among the first to believe that neuroses and psychoses could be treated, offering hope to many whom organized religion had abandoned. And his ideas regarding unconscious motivation called attention to an important and previously neglected aspect of human behavior. If his ideas about human behavior were unduly negative, and they were, it was simply because research revealing the cooperative aspects of human behavior was not yet available.

Freud believed that frustration of the id, especially sexual frustration, was a major cause of mental illness. He advocated permissive child training and the abandonment of legal and moral restraints on sexual behavior. He wrote: "man's discovery that sexual (genital) love afforded him the strongest experiences of satisfaction, and in fact provided him with the prototype of all happiness, must have suggested to him that he should continue to seek the satisfaction of happiness in his life along the path of sexual relations and that he should make genital eroticism the central point of his life." In a letter to an American mother, Freud said: "Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of sexual functions produced by a certain arrest of sexual development."



Dr. Peters will find it very hard, I believe, to prove that Dr. Freud's negative, antireligious, relativistic view of human nature is compatible with the realistic but positive views of Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, and most of the other Founding Fathers.

. . . from New York

by Bertram Lippman

Dr. Peters is identified as an Ed.D. He tells us that he is a practicing psychoanalyst. In my view Ed.D.'s are among the least educated, least pertinent, of university people. I offer that opinion from my perspective as a former high school and college teacher. Thus I did not expect to find much in Dr. Peters's letter that could enlighten me, and I was right. Dr. Peters speaks for psychoanalysis. To many of us nonprofessionals it seems that the one thing unifying that profession is its constant and basic fragmentation. The ordinary practitioners tend to close ranks and to cultivate their professionalism, but among the published "names" diversity is the norm. It is fair to ask whether a given psychoanalyst is a Freudian, a Jungian, an Adlerian, a Reichian, or a Horney practitioner. Dr. Peters is more pristine and unitary than Freud himself, who changed his mind often and contradicted or disavowed quite a few of his early ideas in his later writings. And there are many who think he was wrong ab initio. Dr. Peters quotes no one directly, specifies no conflicts or differences within the ranks, and implies that those who think and write otherwise than he does are "naive and ignorant."

Mr. Lippman is a former teacher.

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Well, what are *his* ideas? He begins by saying that liberals *"do not like psychoanalysis"* (his emphasis). Farther along in the article he seems to think it is *conservatives* who "do not like" psychoanalysis, because they confuse the "warped and politicized" views of R. D. Laing and his kind with psychoanalysis. He speaks with finality about the "reality principle" as being at the core of psychoanalytic treatment. Presumably the patients are suffering from a failure to perceive the real nature of the world, and it is psychoanalysis which will reveal it to them. And it will do that by methods nowhere specified or detailed except in the conclaves of certain self-ordained authorities, by the use of notions taken from Greek mythology, pure fortuitousness or opportunism, such as "transference," by nothing demonstrable as *fact,* by mystagogic techniques, by the formalization of purely speculative ideas. I used to think of the "core" of psychoanalysis, whether Jungian or Freudian, as mythology and, in my view, the whole phenomenon of Freudianism is not science at all, but a literary and imaginative matrix for the fancies of novelists and sociologists rather than a basis for the research of physical scientists. I like to keep in mind Shestov's dictum that "the desire to simplify what is complex never leads to anything good." What is more complex than man?

The much-discussed novel *The White Hotel* illustrates my idea. It is a blurred mixture of Freudian intuition, metaphysical adventurism, questionable history, and "poetic" imaginings. It no more "explains" nazis and communists than Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" did. Why was the novel taken seriously by the reviewers? Maybe because of the general vogue of Freud among various elevations of the brow in America, the unseriousness of modern literati, and the confusion of the present generation, which is so baffling and frustrating that only some kind of myth can provide surcease.

Freud once said that his theories should not be used for therapy. Dr. Peters, however, takes the curative value of psychoanalysis as unquestionable. He *knows* what reality is. I speak only for myself when I say that psychoanalysis as *treatment* is as scientific as astrology. I have personally known a number of people who have resorted to psychoanalysis. They are all from what passes for the educated class. These "analysands" all have at least one thing in common: they are hopelessly self-centered and quite vocal about their experience on the couch. Far from liberating their individuality, as Dr. Peters claims, the sessions tended to make the patients dependent on a received set of notions. If many such people are "creative," it is only because they were born with such propensities. The difference between those who have had psychoanalysis and those who have only read about it is basic to this discussion. The former are very few; the latter include almost everyone who is literate. How much of what these people have read in the psychoanalytic literature has influenced the modern world is not known. I think, for most of the modern world, it has had not much influence at all.

Dr. Peters Replies

Mr. Clifton raises an interesting challenge to my position by discussing the gnostic nature of Marxist ideology; unfortunately, he misinterprets the nature of psychoanalysis in judging it also to be gnostic. The major argument made by Mr. Clifton rests upon my description of Freudian man as always struggling to expand his conscious ego and to come to terms with his biological urges, which he sees as proof of gnosis. Since gnosis is central to the argument, it is necessary to briefly examine the concept, which I do below, following Alain Besançon's schema.

The central themes of gnostic sects are: 1) an acute sense of the fallen state of the world and the self, and a revolt against that condition; 2) a perception that good and evil exist as irreconcilable elements, now mingled in a harmful way; 3) the very fact of our revolt against evil proves our primal association with good, which opposes evil. The elements of good, which are everywhere imprisoned in evil, can and will escape and return to the primal good. The *elect* can perform the act of discrimination and separation of good and evil within themselves by the choice of personal salvation. The elect can then redeem the rest of the imprisoned good in the world. According to the gnostics, then, evil was exterior to man, and man could be redeemed to the state of primal good. A modern example is that Marxists see all human failings as due to bourgeois corruption. Psychoanalysis believes, on the other hand, that both good and evil are part of man's biological nature and that man must strive to know this nature as fully as possible. However, consciousness will *not* conquer all; Freud believed that the most complete analysis only scratches the surface.

Gnostic certainties are not subject to question or revision; the elect *know.* In the Marxist gnosis "revisionism" is the greatest sin. Psychoanalysis is, however, in constant theoretical ferment. Freud made three major theoretical revisions, and many more have been made since his death. Psychoanalysts know that they do not know, and that, just as Newtonian physics were superseded, Freudian theories will also be superseded. Far from being simply reductionistic, psychoanalysts strongly believe that truth as well as contentment can be achieved through art, myth, and faith. Among the most important criteria for the success of treatment is the individual's ability to find pleasure and meaning in such areas of life. To place psychoanalysis in the same category as est or Maslow is wildly inappropriate. The goal for psychoanalytic treatment is "to love and to work," as Freud stated. To love means to share with, and to sacrifice for, others. To work means to delay gratification, to

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build, to create, to be responsible for oneself. These goals are the opposite of the narcissistic hedonism espoused by the self-actualization movements.

Mr. Goble, the author of the second response, makes two major points. His first point is that psychoanalysis promotes immorality, which he relates to Freud's criticism of religion. His second point is that the Founding Fathers had a positive and hopeful view of their fellow man. He supports his position by a few quotations. An examination of the writings of the Founding Fathers yields information at variance with Mr. Goble's statements.

Such an investigation shows that deism was prominent in the thinking of Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams. Deism promotes reason, order, and balance over revelation, mysticism, and ritual. Franklin, for example, abandoned materialism to embrace then-contemporary deistic affirmations. Religion, he believed, rightly or wrongly, was necessary for the unenlightened. He wrote in 1757: "You yourself may find it easy to live a virtuous Life without . . . Religion . . . But think how great a Proportion of Mankind consists of weak and ignorant Men and Women . . . who have need of the motives of Religion to restrain them from Vice, to support their Virtue, and retain them in the Practice of it . . . till it becomes *habitual,* which is the great Point of it." As for Franklin's opinion of his fellow man, consider what he wrote to Priestley in 1782: "Men I find to be a Sort of beings very badly constructed, as they are . . . more disposed to do Mischief to each other than to make Reparation, much more easily disceived than undisceiv'd." Later in the letter he wonders "if the Species [man] were really worth producing or preserving; but of this I begin to doubt."

Adams, the descendent of Puritans (who were notably negative about man), wrote to Jefferson in 1825: "The Europeans . . . believe that great principle, which has produced this boundless Universe, Newton's Universe, and Hershell's Universe, came down to this little Ball, to be spit-upon by Jews; and untill this awful blasphemy is got rid of, there will never be any liberal science in the world." Others, such as Madison and Paine, echoed these sentiments. Washington was one of the few Founding Fathers who espoused orthodox Christianity.

As for the Whig and Federalist positions on government, John Adams wrote in 1787-88: "To expect self-denial from men, when they have a majority in their favor, and consequently power to gratify themselves, is to disbelieve all history and universal experience." In 1790 Adams wrote to Brand-Hollis: "My fundamental maxim of government is, never to trust the lamb to the custody of the wolf." Washington wrote to Jay: "We have, probably, had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our confederation." Separation of powers was considered the basis of free governments. Jefferson stated in 1783 that "the powers of government should be so divided and balanced among several bodies of magistracy, as that no one could transcend their legal limits, without being effectually checked and restrained by the others."

I maintain that some of the obvious differences between Freud and Adams, Jefferson, and Franklin result from the different contemporary intellectual worlds of 18th-century America and 19th-century Europe. Late-20th-century man can see powerful similarities. The Founding Fathers were skeptical about religion and looked to science and reason for a code of ethical behavior. The Founding Fathers believed that man was susceptible to corruption when given power; hence, checks and balances were necessary.

The last response, written by Mr. Lippman, begins with a self-fulfilling prophecy about the worthlessness of Ed.D.'s rather than with a substantive issue. However, I shall reply to those of his objections that take issue with the content of my essay. Apparently, I did not sufficiently explain my point about the reality principle. The "reality" to which I refer is the "common-sense" reality that enables an individual to function effectively in our culture, in defiance of all philosophic or semantic arguments. Several clinical examples will, I hope, suffice to clarify the nature of the reality at issue.

A hallucination is a case where a person perceives something that is not there; if that person no longer perceives what is not there, we can say that he sees the world more realistically. Then there is the person with a phobia, who fears that which is not realistically dangerous, often being quite aware that this fear is irrational but unable to overcome it nevertheless. If the object is no longer experienced as dangerous we can say that this person's sense of reality is, to that degree, expanded.

Mr. Lippman's statements about the scientific nature of "Freudianism" are contradictory, to say the least. Psychoanalysis cannot be used as "a basis for the research of physical scientists" precisely *because* man is complex. Man cannot be reduced to mechanistic equations as Marxists and behaviorists believe. Mr. Lippman cannot have it both ways. If man is complex and not mechanistically reducible, how can he fault psychoanalysis for maintaining the same position?

Psychoanalysis, as a professional discipline, did not write, and thus takes no responsibility for *The White Hotel.* Again, Mr. Lippman contradicts himself. Obviously, he is distressed at the amount of attention the book received, and yet his response ends with a comment that psychoanalytic literature has had little effect on the modern world. If Mr. Lippman objects to the temporary self-preoccupation evident in people undergoing psychoanalysis, I sympathize with him. If he wishes to say that not many people have been psychoanalyzed, I can only agree with him. If he disapproves of "what passes for the educated classes," that is certainly his privilege; the uneducated have always been suspicious of the educated.

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What all three gentlemen seem to share are the notions that psychoanalysis has not changed in the last 50 years, and that if psychoanalysts aren't totally in agreement with conservatives on *all* points of doctrine, then psychoanalysts are leftists. In attempting to undo the sometimes-pathological hypocrisy of Victorian times, the infancy of psychoanalysis was relatively permissive; it is no longer so. To the extent that psychoanalysis claims to be empirical, it does not espouse specific moralities. This does not make it antimoral any more than medicine is antimoral. Nor does it mean that psychoanalysts do not have morals or believe in morality. Insofar as psychoanalysts offer treatment, like surgeons or ophthalmologists, they do not require that their patients share either their political ideology or their morality. What is most interesting is that much of what psychoanalysts have discovered to be developmentally optimal for growth into mature, responsible adulthood is congruent with much that conservatives have been advocating all along. □

JOURNALISM

Acknowledgments

In an otherwise sleazy, ahistorical, prevaricative article entitled "The Return of Cold War Liberalism," *The Nation,* that bastion of the Eastern high-powered, moneyed, pro-Soviet Establishment, makes clear what might have been confusing to those who supported the anti-war movement during the 1960's and 70's.

> [T]he radicals *made* the movement (*The Nation's* italics).

That's exactly what we've been saying all along. And organs like *The Nation* trumpeted the lie that it was the American nation that rejected the war. So we repeat it now: people who were *objective* (our italics) tools of the Soviet *raison d'état,* and of the communist ideological allegiance facing a timorous Presidency, contrived and manipulated the naiveté of the masses in the service of a revolutionary global strategy. Thanks, *Nation* . . . □

The Organ of Taste

In *New York* magazine—wherein garment-district people sell elegance—

we recently observed a photographic display of some of the precious objects included in A La Vieille Russie's (the Fifth Avenue art gallery) exhibition featuring the work of Carl Fabergé, the famous 19th-century goldsmith and jeweler of the Imperial Court. In *New York's* spread we could see costly artifacts in brass, gold, and enamel; there were pictures not only of the last Czar but also of Stalin and Gorki, who could easily be identified as Nicholas's indirect murderers. There was the cigarette case of the Grand Duke Alexis as well as copies of *Pravda* and *Izvestia*—the latter dated March 1983, which can hardly be classified as an antique. This unlikely assemblage gives us the impression that it was designed by the sort of people who would be thrilled to lay hands on Andropov's false teeth. The whole mélange amounts to a sort of subtle, pro-Soviet propaganda. And as for taste, it would be interesting if we could know what the response of *gospodin* Nabokov or *gospodin* Erté would have been to the sense of taste displayed by the comrades of *New York's* editorial offices. □

But My Mommy Said . . .

To see if his delight over Arthur Koestler's recent suicide was justifiable, one Alexander Cockburn of the *Village Voice* recently phoned home to England. After his mother profanely assured him that it was all right to gloat over the death of such "a bastard," the son skipped to his typewriter to share his mother's elegantly phrased opinion with the world and, incidentally, to reveal how he acquired the peculiar historical and literary sensibilities that make him so useful to *VV.* Thus, in explaining Koestler's release from the prisons of fascist Spain, Cockburn wrote:

> The Communists organized a worldwide campaign to save him. He was released and returned to England to issue a savage denunciation of communism. His name was always mud around the Cockburn household.

So was it around Stalin's hearth. It was, of course, the British, not the communists, whose intervention saved Koestler from execution, and his "savage denunciation of communism," *Darkness at Noon,* was hardly a work of ingratitude but rather one of profound insight into the realities of a system which has destroyed far more human lives than all the fascist regimes put together. But, naturally, for a son of Mrs. Cockburn, bastardizing the truth is just part of the genetic programming. □

Inspiring Boundless Confidence

Here's one sample, which is as endemic as any, of the way the liberal press deals with the news and asks us for our limitless trust:

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A Honduran who was involved in planning U.S. covert activities says the United States has been giving weapons, training and intelligence assistance in Honduras to forces that are fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. His story, given in interviews over the last few days, largely was confirmed by two senators on the Senate Intelligence Committee and a high Russian administration official.

The copy was provided by *The New York Times* News Service and featured on the front page of the *Chicago Tribune.*

The names of "a" Honduran, the "two" senators, and the "high" official were never provided. Why we should believe the *Times* and the *Trib* that "they" even exist is unclear. What gives the press such irrational faith in their own credibility—after all the cant, lies, biases, distortions, and reckless unaccountability that each of us has observed in their pages for the last three decades? Is it some sort of elephantiasis of self-ascribed might or cosmic chutzpah, or a monstrous contempt for the mental capacity of their defenseless serfs—the readers? □

The American Proscenium

The Ingersoll Prizes

On May 19, 1983, Mr. Clayton R. Gaylord of The Ingersoll Foundation, Dr. John A. Howard, president of The Rockford Institute, and Mr. Leopold Tyrmand, editor of *Chronicles of Culture,* made a special announcement at a reception held at the Meridian House International in Washington, D.C. Two major prizes in literature and the humanities have been established by The Ingersoll Foundation, with the cooperation of The Rockford Institute; henceforth, they will be awarded annually for exceptional cultural and intellectual achievements. The prizes are named:

The T. S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing

The Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters

Each award carries an honorarium of $15,000. The sponsors of and donors to this new cultural initiative—whose goals are well defined and which aims at offering a bona fide service to the society and the nation—believe and hope that the caliber and worth of the prize recipients will determine the prizes' future prestige and influence.

Dr. John Howard commented at the reception: "During the past year The Ingersoll Foundation has engaged in a prolonged consideration of its purposes and how they might better be served. It seemed to us that the various organizations our Foundation has been supporting are all forced to cope with a serious deficiency in the society: there is among the participants of most groups a diminishing sense of *personal* responsibility for the well-being of the group. The individual is less inclined to carry his full share in a joint endeavor, be it a family, a corporation, a city or a nation. The *rights* of the individual are being regularly asserted against the claims the group makes upon him, but the obligations that fall upon each person as a community member are seldom addressed. Service to one's country, sacrifice to make a better home for spouse and children, pride in doing one's job well, and other principles that strengthen the commonweal are seldom projected as ideals to be willingly and gladly embraced, as sources of abiding satisfaction. . . . The establishment of the Ingersoll Prizes addresses that central concern of ours, but does so in a project of a much larger magnitude. If the citizens no longer respect and embrace the standards of behavior which constitute the foundation of the free society, it is, we believe, not that the people have consciously and rationally rejected those standards, but rather because they have not been effectively introduced to them. There are talented scholars and authors of our time who address and illustrate and affirm the foundational principles of civic order and human dignity, but their works are not given the attention which they merit. In order to bring their lights out from under the obscurity which the priorities of contemporary culture have assigned to them, we have established The T. S. Eliot Award in Creative Writing and The Richard M. Weaver Award in Scholarly Letters."

Mr. Tyrmand stated in his remarks: "In 1969, the National Book Award in the Science, Philosophy, and Religion category went to R. J. Lifton for *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima.* The Pulitzer Prizes for nonfiction were awarded to Norman Mailer, for *The Armies of the Night,* and René Dubos, for *So Human an Animal: How We Are Shaped by Surroundings and Events.* This was also the year Leo Strauss published his last book: *Liberalism, Ancient and Modern.*

I cite this example not to challenge the stature of the awardees or their writings but only to make clear that the work of a paramount thinker might have been ignored precisely because it was momentous and pregnant with profound ideological and political contents. Leo Strauss, a scholar and refugee from nazi Germany, spent 20 years at the University of Chicago, where he laid the philosophical groundwork for the restoration of the conservative intellectual power in America. He devoted half his life to fostering the ideas he believed necessary to safeguard the American republic, perhaps mankind's last rampart in the struggle for a society structured upon what he called value judgments. Today, the American universities are well stocked with young philosophers and historians who call themselves Straussians. The political upheaval of 1980 probably would have been impossible without

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Straussian theories. Still, despite the integrity of his knowledge and the brilliance of his mind, he was deemed unfit for public recognition and plaudits by the reigning cultural establishment. How deeply and mercilessly this selective ostracism pervades modern American culture is indicated by the fact that the New Columbia Encyclopedia of 1975, replete with names of ephemeral worth, carries *no* entry for Leo Strauss. For that matter, Richard Weaver, the author of *Ideas Have Consequences,* after whom we have named one of our awards, is also *not* listed in those pages. Neither Professor Strauss nor Professor Weaver, the magnitude, impact, and number of their works notwithstanding, has ever received the National Book Award or the Pulitzer Prize.

Leo Strauss and Richard Weaver are no longer among the living, and we may view their proscription with sadness but without passion. However, in Rockford, Illinois, in America's heartland, we feel troubled by the absolutism of verdicts on the relation between creativity and value as they are decreed in New York, Stockholm, and Boston. So we have decided to do something about our anxieties." □

Inquiry and Assessment in Chicago

In the two years since the election of Ronald Reagan and a Republican Senate, most conservatives have wondered more than once if conservative ideas necessarily have conservative consequences. The consideration of that very question, not only topically but intellectually as well, was the theme of The Philadelphia Society's annual meeting held recently in Chicago. Addressing various aspects of the theme before the assembled officers, members, and guests of the Society were Lewis Lehrman, Anthony Harrigan, Otto Scott, Leopold Tyrmand, Edwin Meese III, George Gilder, Steve Pejovich, Paul Weaver, Richard Allen, and Stephen Haseler. While convened, the Society also named Russell Kirk as its new president, succeeding Edwin Feulner, Jr., and honored W. Glenn Campbell and Gerhart Niemeyer as Distinguished Members. Though some disagreement about specific political and economic issues

was evident in the statements of the various speakers and in the question-answer sessions, most in attendance shared the perception articulated by Otto Scott and Leopold Tyrmand that any lasting and profound conservative influence upon these spheres depends finally upon conservative success in the realm of human minds and the national culture. For no matter how perspicacious ideas may be, if their circulation is restricted to academic offices, political caucuses, and conservative conventions, they will have embarrassingly little impact on this society's consciousness or its political fortunes. □

Truth & Fact

A miniwar is raging on the fringes of the all-out war that the liberal media wage against the Reagan Administration. The junior conflict concerns the practices of the United States Information Agency, and it is the subject *preferé* of the storm troopers of the entire "progressive" spectrum—from *The Nation* to the sleazy journalistic sausage-makers of the Jack Anderson stripe. Even the venerable *New York Times* has joined the attackers. The most popular weapon is the old, well-tested, proven, simple, unadulterated lying that anyone can manage by adumbrating, twisting, and misinterpreting the facts. Not that we are totally surprised to see a fat fabrication in those respected pages: one has only to read some of the *Times'* columnists or Op-Ed page contributors to find out that more-or-less genteel mendacity is alive and well on West 43rd Street. Yet, the case quoted below forced us to emit a whistle of admiration. Here is what Mr. Richard N. Gardner, the former U.S. Ambassador to Italy under President Carter, wrote in the *New York Times Magazine* in March 1983:

> In previous Administrations, Republican and Democratic, there was never a partisan loyalty test applied to the lecturers chosen to go abroad under these programs. One of the great strengths of the 'American Participants' program was that it reflected our pluralistic society with a diversity of American views. But today someone under consideration to participate in this program is asked if he is prepared to support the foreign policy of the Reagan Administration.

In this assured paragraph factitious spuriousness is crafted into a gem of falsehood. We know countless scholars and intellectuals of every ideological coloring and persuasion who have been sent abroad during the last two years by the USIA, and none of them ever reported being asked to support Reagan's foreign policy. At the same time, we challenge both Mr. Gardner and the *Times* to publish a name of a conservative writer, journalist, academician, or man of letters who was delegated by the Kennedy, Johnson, or Carter Administrations to represent America, our "pluralistic society," and the "diversity of American views." □

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